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THE LAMENTATION EXPERIENCE:

A Study of the Reactions of an Individual in Distress, as shown in the Literatures of Babylonia and of Israel.

by

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Preface

Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the Old Testament are taken from the Revised (American Standard, 1901) Version of the Bible, published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York. Reconstructed texts and translations are indicated in the footnotes, except in Chapter VI, "Magic in the Psalms," where all texts are the author's translations. Quotations from the Apocrypha are taken from the Authorized Version.

The numbering of verses in the Psalter follows the English version. This differs in some cases from the Hebrew version (followed by the German), which begins to number with the title of the Psalm.

Babylonian texts in the author's collection are numbered, and references to them are designated by Roman numerals.

Introduction

BABYLONIAN AND HEBREW PSALMS The Book of Psalms is a rich depository of the devotional literature of Israel, containing many poems which grew out of the experience of distress. Among Christian people today it is probably the best known and best loved book of the Old Testament.

Within the last century scholars have discovered that other ancient religions had their literature comparable to the Old Testament. Racially and culturally the ancient Babylonians were related to the Hebrews, and the religious literature of Babylonia offers many points of comparison with Hebrew literature.[1]

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1 For general comparisons between Babylonian and Hebrew literature see Barton, AB and Rogers, CP.

Like the Hebrews, the Babylonians had their devotional literature, but it is not available to us in a well-preserved collection like the Psalter. The Babylonian literature is in the form of clay tablets which have been discovered by archaeologists in the sites of cities in ancient Babylonia and Assyria, a great many of them being found in Kouyunjik (Nineveh) in the library of Ashurbanipal, whose scribes had collected and copied them. These tablets are now in museums to which they have been removed from the sites. Those with which we have to deal are chiefly in the British Museum.[2]

These tablets have been copied, published, transliterated and translated by various scholars. The basic work is the copying and publication of the tablets in collections for translation.[3] The translations are found in collected editions and individually in various publications. No complete and definitive edition of the Babylonian literature has been published, primarily because discovery and translation still goes on.[4] Because of this lack of a collection, and because of the difficulty of referring to many different publications, we have in-

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2 For an account of their discovery see Barton, AB 48ff., and Harper, AB ivff.

3 See Index of Cuneiform Texts.

4 Harper, Assyrian and Babylonian Literature is the nearest approach to such a collection, but it is far from being complete or definitive. It includes a wide selection of literature, but the work is primarily literary rather than scholarly. One outstanding lack of this book is its failure to give the sources from which its selections are taken.

cluded in the Appendix a collection of Babylonian texts.[1] These are the most important of the texts on which the present study is made.

Comparisons between the Babylonian and the Hebrew psalms have been made from different viewpoints. A brief review of some of these comparisons will show the variety of treatment and the conclusions suggested. Recent commentaries have taken note of the similarities between the two literatures. Barnes, The Psalms (1931) devotes a few pages to the subject of "Gentile Psalms," but makes only very general comparisons. Oesterley, A Fresh Approach to the Psalms (1937) begins with a chapter on "The Psalms as a Part of World Literature." Parallels between Babylonian and Hebrew psalms are indicated, but the conclusion is drawn that the similarities point, not to borrowing, but to a general type of literature to which both belong in origin. Gunkel appeals frequently to Babylonian parallels to throw light on the form or content of biblical psalms. See Einleitung in die Psalmen (1933) and Die Psalmen (1926). Many verbal parallels between Babylonian and Hebrew psalms are drawn by Brown in "The Religious Poetry of Babylonia," an article in the Presbyterian Review (1888). These similarities in word and phrase are based chiefly on Sayce, Hibbert Lectures (1887). Entire psalms edited for comparison with biblical psalms will be found in Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament (1912) and Barton, Archaeology and the Bible (1916 and subsequent editions). A warning against hasty conclusions drawn from Babylonian parallels is voiced by G. R. Driver in Ch. VI of Simpson's, The Psalmists (1926): "The Psalms in the Light

1 See Appendix and Index of Translations.

of Babylonian Research." He makes comparison between the poetic form, words and phrases, and ideas in the Babylonian and Hebrew psalms; and while he finds many superficial resemblances, he attributes these to similarity of experience and expression rather than to borrowing, and he maintains that the moral and spiritual differences are more significant than the similarities. A treatment which is more apologetic than critical is found in a little pamphlet by Blaikie, entitled The Psalms, Compared with the Hymns of Different Religions, an Evidence of Inspiration, (undated, but obviously not recent). His study is based on a very limited acquaintance with the literature of Babylonia, but it proves point to his own satisfaction.

Another approach to the problem is to study the types of text in the two collections of literature. Zimmern in Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete in Auswahl (AO 1905) points out the different types, or Gattungen, in the Babylonian literature and compares them briefly with similar types[1] in the biblical psalms. This approach is carried further by taking one type of psalm and comparing its representatives in the two literatures. Stummer, Sumerisch-akkadische Parallelen zum Aufbau alttestamentlicher Psalmen (1922) points out a common structure on which are built the lamentation psalms of the two literatures. Begrich, "Die Vertrauensäusserung im israelitischen Klageliede des Einzelnen und in seinem babylonischen Gegenstück" (ZAW 1928) narrows the field one step farther and compares the lamentation psalms at one point: - the basis

1 Note the Gattungen distinguished by Gunkel in his Einleitung in die Psalmen.

of trust. The invocations to Babylonian psalms (including lamentation psalms) are compared with similar invocations and independent hymns in the Psalter by Cumming in The Assyrian and Hebrew Hymns of Praise (1934).

PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY The purpose of the present study is to compare the lamentation experience in the two literatures. This is the experience in which a man suffering from some distress called to God (or the gods) for help. The experience included three elements: the situation of distress, the actions performed, and the words spoken to secure deliverance. In both literatures the study could be extended by the inclusion of texts used in public lamentation by communities or groups of people suffering from some general calamity; but we shall refer to these only for comparison and shall hold our attention primarily on the texts which were used by individuals suffering from personal distress.

PROCEDURE We shall begin with the Babylonian texts. Our interest is primarily in those words and actions which may be compared with similar ones in the Old Testament literature, but in order to show the whole range of the experience we shall study briefly some words and actions which may have no parallel in the Old Testament.

In the second section we shall study the experience of lamentation as it is indicated in the Old Testament. The Psalter will be our primary source here, but other parts of the Old Testament will throw light on the experience. The third step in our study will be to interpret the comparisons which may be drawn.

BABYLONIAN LITERATURE

i Introduction

Chapter I

The Texts

DATE AND DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS Our problem in studying the Babylonian literature might be simplified if we could arrange the texts in chronological order and discover the development of the ideas they express, but it is practically impossible to assign a definite date to any of the texts or to arrange them in any chronological order. External evidence of date is lacking, and the texts contain no definite internal evidence in the form of references to events or persons by which they might be dated. Where a text does contain the name of a known king, such as the Prayer of Ashurnasirpal I,[1] the name may be only incidental, as the king adapted an earlier prayer to his use. The persistence of old texts and their adaptation to later uses was common. Peters points out their persistence and the impossibility of dating by their reference to cities; "The first thing we notice about these hymns is their persistency. One Sumerian hymn, originating in Nippur presumably as early as 3,000 B. C., contains a colophon stating that it was copied in 97 B. C. It was apparently still in use at that period. .... But while they thus persisted as ritual hymns, they did undergo changes to adapt them to use in new conditions. Hymns originating in Nippur were changed by the addi-

1 XVII.

tion of other verses to make them suitable for use in other temples, especially in Babylon."[1] Referring to a Psalm to Enlil,[2] he says: "Enlil is besought to 'repent and behold thy city.' Nippur and the Temple E-kur, its parts, gates, storehouses, etc., are enumerated, following which come Ur and Larsa taking the place of Nippur. That is, what was originally a Nippur hymn was later adapted for use in other temples also.[3]

The texts in their present form are the result of a long process of preservation and editing. Those from the library of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria about B.C. 669-625, were edited by his scribes during his reign; but as L. W. King points out, there is little doubt that the sources from which they were compiled were Babylonian and therefore much earlier.[4] As he interprets them, the catch lines and first lines give evidence that the texts have been subjected to several processes of editing as they were collected, selected, and rearranged.[5] The process of copying is further indicated by the existence in some cases of duplicates of the same text from widely different periods of time.[6] Weber notes that we occasionally find a text in three copies covering a period of two thousand years.[7]

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1 Peters, PL 16.
2 CT XV 13. Langdon, SBH 293ff.
3 Peters, PL 17.
4 King, BMS v.
5 King, BMS xx.
6 The Hymn to Shamash translated by Gray is found in three copies in the British Museum. See Gray, ST 9. Note the Index to Tablets and Duplicates in King, BMS 195ff.
7 "Es ist interressant dass wir gelegentlich denselben Hymnus in nicht weniger als drei Absoriften kennen lernen, die aus dem 3. Jahrtausend, aus Assurbanipals Bibliothek und aus der Arsacidenzeit stammen, also eine

No doubt during such a period as this new texts were composed by the priests in the spirit of old ones, and thus the collections grew with the passing of time without making any development in religious ideas. The people who composed this literature had no idea of development and never consciously attempted to create anything new. For them it was sufficient to preserve and repeat the old ideas. This same lack of any conception of growth and development is observed in the Old Testament literature, where Deuteronomy is ascribed to Moses and where the eighth century prophets regarded themselves as reinterpreters of the old teaching. The religious value of the eighth century prophets and Deuteronomy is that while they claimed to interpret the old they actually pioneered with new ideas. Within the limits of the literature we are studying the Babylonians undoubtedly made some progress in their religious ideas, but they clung with such tenacity to the old forms and the old ideas that no chronological development can be traced.

When we discover in the Babylonian texts different religious ideas which seem to indicate a development from one stage of religion to another, our tendency will be to assign the texts expressing primitive ideas to an earlier period and those showing higher conceptions to a later period; but such an arrangement is not justified. Development there may have been, but along with the new the old forms were used, and additions to the body of literature were made in the "old" and the "new" forms simultaneously.

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mehr als 2,000jährige Überlieferungsgeschichte aufweisen, und es ist der stärkeste Beweis für das oben über die Unmöglichkeit einer chronologischer Bestimmung dieser Literaturstücken Bemerkte, dass die betreffenden Texte diesen ungeheuren Zeitraum hindurch fast völlig unverändert geblieben sind." Weber, LBA 120.

ii Distress Ascribed to Evil Spirits

Chapter II

The Use of Magic

SITUATION We begin with what appears to be the most primitive stage of belief related to the distress which a man suffers: the belief in the power of evil spirits. The belief in evil spirits which plague men is a very common belief in antiquity. All sorts of distress which a man might suffer were ascribed to the activities of evil spirits: accidents, pains, sickness, or persistent misfortune. Great misfortunes such as plagues and fevers, petty annoyances such as a sudden fall or headache, and psychological disturbances such as passion, hatred, and jealousy were all regarded as indicating the presence and power of demons.

Our assumption that belief in the power of evil spirits represents the most primitive stage of belief is not universally accepted. Morganstern[1] reverses the order and maintains that men first believed in evil spirits as messengers of the high gods and only later ascribed to them an independent existence. According to his theory, misfortune of all kinds was ascribed to the divine anger, caused by sin of some kind. The messengers of the divine anger were the evil spirits, which entered the body of the sinner and caused sickness. "As servants of the gods they

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1 Morganstern, The Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion.

took on to a certain extent, a divine nature, were, for all purposes, gods of inferior rank, fulfilling the destructive orders of their enraged superiors. However, so far they existed only as mediators of evil between the great gods and men."[1] In time men came to have a different view of the evil spirits. Men came to see that evil comes unexpected and undeserved. Along with the conception of unknown sin came the idea that evil was not from the great gods, that the messengers had power to work evil in themselves. "This view developed until finally we have a host of gods, whose only aim is to work evil to mankind."[2]

This theory of development runs counter to the view commonly held of the history of Semitic religion: the development from animism through polytheism and henotheism to monotheism, in which the number of deities becomes fewer in the process of development and originally independent deities are depressed to the status of angels or demons.[3] We maintain that the belief in evil spirits is more primitive than the belief in the high gods, that distress was first ascribed to the activity of evil spirits as independent beings, and later, according to a more developed view, distress was ascribed to the anger of the high gods, who used evil spirits as their instruments or messengers.

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1 Ditto 6.
2 Ditto 6.
3 See for example Oesterley, HR; Kautzsch, "Religion of Israel" in HBD Extra Volume; Leslie, OTR; Knudson, RT (especially pp. 196ff.).

Indications of the characteristics and activities ascribed to the evil spirits are found in the names which the Babylonians applied to them. "The names of many of them, as utukku, shedu, alu, gallu, point to 'strength,' and 'greatness' as their main attribute; other names as lilu, 'night spirit,' and the feminine form lilitu, are indicative of the moment chosen by them for their work; while again, names like ekimmu, the 'seizer', akhkhazu, the 'capturer,' rabisu, the 'overthrower,' show the aim that the demons have in view. Putting these names together, we may form a general idea of the conceptions connected with the demons. They lurk in hidden or remote places, in graves, in the shadow of ruins, on the tops of mountains, in the wilderness. Their favorite time of activity is at dead of night. They glide noiselessly like serpents, entering houses through holes and crevices. They are powerful, but their power is directed solely towards evil. They take firm hold of their victims and torture them mercilessly."[1]

In addition to the demons, another danger which constantly threatened men was seen in the persons of witches or sorcerers. The belief was prevalent that certain human beings possessed demoniac power and could exercise it for evil purposes over whomsoever they pleased. They might be male or female, but for some reason the preference was given to females, and the witch is more commonly encountered than the sorcerer. The witches had all the power of the demons to cause sickness or distress in a man, and

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1 Jastrow, RBA 260.

in the incantation texts the relationship between them is so close that in the matter of belief no distinction is made between them. The witches were believed to be able to invoke the demons and send them to trouble any person that they designated.

The means employed by the witches to bring about the desired evil effect were varied. Direct means were the glance of an 'evil eye', the speaking of an 'evil word', or the preparation of a magical potion of poisonous weeds. Indirect means rested upon the principle commonly known as sympathetic magic. The desired effect was acted out symbolically on some article which represented the person to be bewitched. So a witch would tie knots in a rope to strangle the victim or wrack his limbs. A more popular method was to make an image of some soft material and by burning or mutilating it inflict tortures upon the person represented. Note these words in which a man describes those who have persecuted him:

> Those who have made images of me, reproducing my features,
> Who have taken away my breath, torn my hairs,
> Who have rent my clothes, have hindered my feet from
> treading the dust. [1]

SYMBOLICAL ACTIONS Against the demons and witches men used various

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1 Maqlu I. See Jastrow, RBA 286.

means of protection: small talismans[1] or amulets to carry, and tablets or images to set up at the entrance of the house.[2] These means of protection were no more completely successful than the sanitary measures taken by modern man for the prevention of infectious disease; and as modern man sometimes becomes sick and resorts to a physician, the primitive Babylonian, when his means of protection failed, sought out a person skilled in the methods of dealing with evil spirits. This would be an exorcist or priest of magic. Jastrow suggests that at an early period of Babylonian culture one of the main functions of priests was to combat the influence of evil spirits.[3] In the course of time the priests at the temples were divided into classes with special functions assigned to them, and the priests of the incantation rituals were called ašipu or mašmâšu.

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1 "The talismans were of different kinds. First of all there were those that consisted of bands of cloth, covered with certain written formulae, and were fastened to the furniture or the garments like the phylacteries of the Jews. There were also the amulets in different materials, which were worn around the neck, as a safeguard against diseases, demons, and misfortunes."

"Talismanic figures of quite another kind, but inspired by a much more original idea, were also employed. The Chaldeans represented the demons under such hideous forms that they believed that it was sufficient for them to be shown their own image to cause them to flee away alarmed." Lenormant, CM 45, 40.

2 "The real guardians of the house were the two good spirits, the šedu and lamassu. These were represented by the colossi, the so-called 'winged bulls', that stood at each side of the entrance of temples and other buildings .... so that no evil spirits might pass through." Morganstern, DS 25.

3 Jastrow, RBA 268.

To the exorcist the sufferer told his troubles, and the exorcist, by such means of diagnosis as he had, determined the nature of the evil spirits and decided on the best means of driving them out. He then prescribed certain magical acts to be performed and an incantation formula to be recited. It is not clear whether the actions were to be performed and the words spoken by the priest, or by the sufferer, or by both. References to the exorcists in the letters to the kings of Assyria indicate that they performed the ceremonies. Thus a sick man, writing to the king, says:

> Now may I not be deprived of the protection of the king, my lord. May he appoint at my side an exorcist (mašmâšu) (and) a physician (asû) ... may they perform the ceremonies (on my behalf). [1]

Morganstern believes that the layman was not permitted to recite the incantation formula and that he had very little to do in the entire ceremony. "The part that the layman took in the ceremonies was merely nominal. Apparently little more was expected of him than to be present."[2] In some texts the directions indicate that words were to be spoken by the layman. An incantation text which Langdon designates as a Kisub Prayer by a Priest, and which by its oontent is shown to be a text for magical ceremonies (note especially Reverse lines 18-28), inoludes this direction:

> "This incantation the king shall recite thrice."[3]

The analogy of other types of lamentation texts (see below) would lead us to conclude that certain parts of the formula were to be recited by the priest and certain parts by the layman.

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1 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 283. Cf. the references in No. 272 and 295.
2 Morganstern, DS 145. Cf. p. 144.
3 XVIII Reverse 31.

It may be that originally the magical actions were regarded as of primary importance, but we know of the actions only through the preservation of the formulas which were spoken to accompany them. From the formulas we reconstruct the actions performed. The actions were symbolical, corresponding to those employed by the witches and designed to counteract and overcome them.

The tying of knots and the performance of other actions to overcome similar actions on the part of witches is indicated in this incantation from the Maqlu series:

> Incantation. They have used all kinds of charms
> to entwine me as with ropes,
> to catch me as in a cage,
> to tie me as with cords,
> to overpower me as in a net,
> to twist me as with a sling,
> to tear me as a fabric,
> to fill me with dirty water as that which runs down a wall,
> to throw me down as a wall.
> But I by command of Marduk, the lord of charms,
> By Marduk, the master of bewitchment,
> Both the male and female witch
> as with ropes I will entwine,
> as in a cage I will catch,
> as with cords I will tie,
> as in a net I will overpower,
> as in a sling I will twist,
> as a fabric I will tear,
> with dirty water as from a wall I will fill,
> as a wall throw them down.
> ... thy ... the image of the sorcerer and the sorceress.
>
> Pronounce the incantation in a whisper in the presence of an image of bitumen over which gypsum is poured. [1]

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1 Tallquist, Maqlu II 148ff. English tr. (except the last two lines) from Jastrow, RBA 272.

A long series of actions is indicated in the 5th and 6th tablets of the Shurpu series. An onion was peeled and cast into the fire; a date was cut and cast into the fire; a branch was torn away and cast into the fire; wool (a piece of cloth) was torn and cast into the fire; goat's hair was torn and cast into the fire; a seed was cast into the fire; the suppliant kindled fire in a large vessel and burned the offering. Each act was accompanied by an incantation to break the ban and drive away the spell.[1]

The making and destroying of images played an important part in magic against evil spirits as well as in the casting of spells by the enchanters. The second tablet of the Maqlu series consists of a series of incantations, each of which was designed to be spoken "in the presence of an image," that is, to be spoken as an image was made. The images were to be made of different materials: wax, clay, honey, fat, bitumen. The images were to be destroyed by melting or burning, as these lines show:

> As these images totter, melt away, and disappear,
> So may the sorcerer and the sorceress totter, melt away,
> and disappear.[2]

Similar treatment of images is indicated in a brief incantation from the first tablet of the series, which begins:

> I raise the torch, their images I burn.[3]

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1 Zimmern, Shurpu pp. 25ff.
2 Tallquist, Maqlu II 134-135.
3 " " I 135

In this incantation a catalog of evil spirits was named while the images melted and burned, the idea being that when the right name was named the effect of the burning images would be brought on that spirit.

Another significant type of action was concerned with the removal of evil spirits from a sick person by some process of washing.[1] The removal of evil was symbolized by washing the hands or the body by means of holy water. In time other liquids, chiefly oil, took over the function and were used for anointing purposes, but the original rite was one of washing by water. Such a ceremony as this had to be performed with precautions so that the evil spirits washed away might not attach themselves to an innocent person and defile him. The ceremonies were often held on the bank of a river so that the running water might carry away the evil spirits.[2] Another precaution was to perform the cleansing ceremonies in an isolated building reserved for that purpose and called the bit rimqi. "This was probably a small temporary shelter, erected by the mašmâšu in some out-of-the-way place, where there was no danger of other persons being contaminated by the evils purged from the sick man."[3]

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1 See Morganstern, DS 54ff.

2 Note this reference in the description of a ceremony of cleansing: "The king should go down to the river a third time; (and) after performing his rite not less than three times, the king may (well) do (it) again." Pfeiffer, SLA No. 271.

3 Morganstern, DS 143. A shelter like this is indicated in the description of a lustral incantation (Nam.Búr.Bi.): "During the 7th day he shall stay in the reed hut; expiatory rites shall be performed for him." Pfeiffer, SLA No. 270.

If it was desired that the evils purged from the sick man might be attached to some definite person, such as the sorcerer who had sent the evil spirits and caused the sickness, the rite of washing was combined with the use of images. An image of the person designated was made, and over this the sick man washed his hands, the idea being that as the water dripped from his hands onto the images, the evil would be carried to them and thus to the persons they represented.[1] The ceremony is indicated by these lines from the Maqlu series:

> An image of the witch out of meal shalt thou form in the copper wash bowl;
> A clay image shalt thou put to it; he shall wash his hands above (them).[2]

MAGICAL FORMULAS The incantation to be spoken accompanying the performance of actions would be taken from a collection which the exorcist had available. Since it was important that the right formula be used, it was desirable that the temple have available a large collection of formulas suitable to various needs and designed to accompany different magical actions. Once a formula had proved effective, it would be preserved for future use; and the temple collection would grow by the addition of new formulas, the adaptation of old formulas, and the borrowing of formulas from other temples.[3]

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1 Morganstern, DS 54.

2 Tallquist, Maqlu VIII 56-57.

3 On the collection of incantations see Jastrow, RBA 254.

Our sources indicate a much larger body of literature than is available to us now. Reference has already been made to the Maqlu and the Shurpu series.[1] Both names signify "burning", and the series are so called from the chief topic dealt with in them - the burning of images of the sorcerers. Other series which have been translated were called UTUKKI LIMNUTI, "The Evil Spirits"; AŠAKKI MARṢUTI, "Fever Sickness";[2] and ṬI'I, Headache".[3]

Hints on the extent of the "lost" literature are found in the references to types and names of texts in some of the letters to the kings of Assyria. The Nam.Bur.Bi, "Lustral incantations," were apparantly related to the removal of sin[4] by the process of washing, with a possible relation to the sin offering.[5] These are frequently mentioned in the letters.[6] Two texts of this type are named by their catch-lines: "Ea..." and "If the moon and the sun are in halo, at that time is protection afforded."[7] Closely related to this type are the Bur.Ru.Da, "Releasing Incantations."[8] Their relationship to the former type is shown by the fact that they were performed together.[9] The Er.Sa.Ku.Mal, "Penitential Psalms," which are once mentioned as performed with the Nam.Bur.Bi[10] are of a different type, which we shall study below.

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1 Zimmern, Die Beschwörungstafeln Shurpu. Tallquist, Die Assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlu.

2 Thompson, The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia Vol. I.

3 Ditto Vol. II

No claim is made that the references above constitute an exhaustive list of the incantation texts available, but these are the most significant ones. See also the texts in Sayce HL.

4 Morganstern, DS 138-140.

5 " " 112.

In one letter reference is made to a series of tablets named "Battle."[11] Other tablets named by their catch-lines are the following: "In the battle the spear shall not come near a man,"[12] "The epidemic and the plague shall not come near the palace,"[13] and "Disease and fever shall not come near the house of a man;"[14] "To rest in the wilderness and again to sleep in the palace." "May Ea and Marduk complete wisdom," "Their blood;"[15] "The signs of heaven and earth, all of them."[16] The indications are that many of the texts named were concerned with public rather than private distress, but these references will show something of the extent and the variety of the incantation literature which was available.

Our conclusions on the nature of the incantation texts must be drawn from the texts which are available. In the magical formulas the important elements are descriptions of the evil suffered and of the desired release from that evil. The description of the disease suffered may be lengthened into a monotonous series of symptoms or a recounting of how the demons have attacked. The description of the desired release is intended to force this release if it is spoken correctly; it is not a request, but a demand, which must of necessity be obeyed. This demand

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6 See Pfeiffer, SLA No. 257, 270, 273, 275, 277, 278, 309.
7 Ditto No. 257.
8 Ditto No. 277, 288.
9 Ditto No. 277.
10 Ditto No. 323.
11 Ditto No. 256.
12 Ditto No. 256.
13 Ditto No. 277.
14 Ditto No. 277.
15 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 256.
16 Ditto No. 323. This was an incantation against the evils of an eclipse.

may be an interpretation of the magical actions performed, as in these lines:

> I raise the torch, their images I burn,
> Of the utukku, the shedu, the rabisu, the ekimmu,
> The labartu, the labasi, the akhkhazu,
> Of the lilu and lilutu and ardat lili,
> And every evil that seizes hold of men.
> Tremble, melt away, and disappear!
> May your smoke rise to heaven,
> May Shamash destroy your limbs,
> May the son of Ea, the great magician, restrain your strength.
> Pronounce the incantation.[1]

Or the demand may derive its power from the words themselves apart from any actions, as in these words:

> May the curse depart to the desert, a pure place.
> The curse, O spirit of heaven, conjure! O spirit of earth, conjure.[2]

In some cases the formula, instead of beginning with a description of the evil suffered, begins with the invocation of a deity and then directs the power of that deity to relieve the distress. This form approaches that of the prayers, which we shall study below.[3]

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1 Tallquist, Maqlu I 135ff. English tr. from Jastrow, RBA 287.
2 IV R 14 No. 2 Rev. 1, 2. Sayce, HL 487.
3. Note the incantations in Tallquist, Maqlu I, II.

Chapter III

Appeal to the Deities

SITUATION The second possible reaction of an individual in distress attributed to the activity of evil spirits is in the form of an appeal to a deity to drive out the troubling spirit. Theoretically a great gulf separates prayers from incantations; for, as we have seen, the incantations are magic, and prayer is an expression of religion. In prayer the suppliant asks for and awaits the aid of the deity, knowing that the deity may hear and answer, or not hear, or hear and not answer. This is in sharp contrast to the belief that the correct performance must immediately bring the desired result. However, this theoretical great gulf does not exist in fact, and the magical and religious texts shade into each other so that at times it is difficult to distinguish between them.

The situation which gave rise to the prayers is the same as that which gave rise to the magical formulas: a situation of distress, in which an individual suffered from sickness, misfortune, or persecution and attributed his distress to the activities of evil spirits. Note these references to sickness and to the curse or ban of a sorcerer:

May the sickness of my body be torn away;
May the groaning of my flesh be consumed!
May the consumption of my muscles be removed!
May the poisons that are on me be loosened! [1]
May the ban be torn away, may the ... be consumed!

The sickness ... do thou destroy, and take thou away the disease of my body.
O my god and my goddess, judge ye mankind and possess me.
By the command of thy mouth may there never approach anything evil, the magic of the sorcerer and the sorceress.
May there never approach me the poisons of the evil ... of men.
May there never approach the evil of dreams, of powers, (and) portents of heaven and of earth. [2]

Any time of crisis or of special danger would be an occasion particularly susceptible to the influence of evil spirits. So we find a prayer offered, apparently by a priest or "magician," for a woman approaching childbirth, asking for protection from enchantment and sorcery.[3]

Some of the prayers contained a formula relative to an eclipse of the moon, which was looked upon as an evil portent:

In the evil of an eclipse of the moon which in such and such a month and such and such a day has taken place.
In the evil of the powers, of the portents, evil and not good, which are in my palace and my land. [4]

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1 I 45 - 48
2 VI 60-64. Note also VII 11 - 12, X 22 - 23.
3 XV.
4 I 12 - 13

King notes that the formula is probably a later addition to the text.[1] Many texts, by the simple addition of the formula, would be suitable for use after such a calamity. The two lines quoted above break the continuity of the prayer.[2] Further evidence that they are intrusion is the fact that they are found in some copies of the same prayer, but omitted in others.[3]

It is evident that in Babylonia an eclipse was regarded as an evil omen. The apprehension related to an eclipse is frequently mentioned in the State Letters of Assyria, though the evil is more often predicted for the king's enemies than for the king himself. Note these references:

> On the 15th day of Tebet, during the middle watch, a lunar eclipse took place: it began in the East and passed toward the West: a sinister omen, whose evil (import) is confined to Amurru and to its territory. (Indeed) it portends evil to the king of Amurru and to his country. Since the chief enemy of the king my lord is in Amurru, the king my lord may do as he wishes: the arms of the king my lord shall conquer, the king shall accomplish his defeat. 4

> As to that eclipse of the sun, of which the king spoke, the eclipse did not take place. On the 27th I shall look again and send in (a report). For whom does the king my lord fear misfortune? I have no information whatsoever. 5

The ceremony prescribed against the evil of an eclipse is

Nam.Búr.Bi.

> This eclipse of the moon which took place brings woe to the countries. It portends evil for Amurru, (indeed) it brings havoc to Amurru, to the Hittite land, or again to Chaldea. (Although) it is auspicious for the king my lord, and they will indeed not neglect the watch, they should perform for the king my lord the lustral incantations against eclipses. 6

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1 "Probable that only the formula, and not the prayer or incantation itself, was composed for the eclipse." King, BMS xxv.

2 Similar intrusion is seen in V 10-12.

While these references make it clear that the eclipse was regarded as a cause of evil and an occasion for special ceremonies, they do not indicate that the prayers we have noted above were related to the eclipse. Therefore we conclude that these prayers were originally concerned with private distress and that to some of them were added later references to an eclipse, which was regarded as the cause of distress.

ACTIONS The procedure which lead up to the offering of a prayer was similar to that which introduced the use of a magical formula. The individual in distress would go to a sanctuary, presumably that of his own guardian deity, and tell his distress to the priest, who would prescribe certain actions to be performed and words to be uttered; but in this case the actions were acts of entreaty to propitiate a god, and the words were a prayer to the god rather than conjurations against a demon. The priest led the suppliant into the sanctuary, presented him to the god, and assisted him or joined with him in the acts of entreaty. The priest might recite all of the prayer[7] or part of it.[8]

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3 See King, BMS xxvi.
4 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 324.
5 Ditto No. 315.
6 Ditto No. 309. Cf. No. 323.
7 No. XVIII is a priest's prayer. No. VI is to be recited by the priest on behalf of the sick man. See King, BMS 59.
8 No. XXI is "A Semitic Prayer in Part-song," with parts for priest and penitent.

The distinctive action was the raising of the hand, an act of entreaty performed before the deity by the suppliant or the suppliant and priest. Note these references:

> May the raising of my hand, the invocation of the great gods give release.
> .....
> At the raising of my hand may thy heart have rest, O Marduk.[1]
>
> The raising of my hand accept! Hearken to my prayer.[2]

Langdon gives this description of the act: "The gesture of the 'kiss hand', described as 'lifting of the hand', can be traced by prolific representations on seals of the earliest period. On many of these seals from 3500 B.C. to the end of the Dungi period (2328) the penitent, who worships with right hand raised to lips, is led into the presence of his god by his own protecting deity. This is a fantasy of religious idealism, and it may be assumed that the kalu priest actually conducted the worshiper to his god."[3]

The act of raising the hand was sometimes performed more than once. The colophon to No. III prescribes that the ceremony of raising the hand be three times performed.[4] King suggests that the repetition of the act was a substitute for the repetition of the whole prayer,[5] but there were also occasions in which the prayer or the entire ceremony was to be done

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1 VI 79, 88.
2 X 21.
3 Langdon, BPP viii.
4 See King, BMS No. 8.
5 See King, BMS pp. 43 and 13.

three times. We note this direction in the colophon to the long Prayer to Ishtar:

> This incantation before the goddess Ishtar three times shalt thou recite. [1]

The prescription to perform a rite three times is found in one of the State Letters:

> In the matter of the rite about which the king my lord wrote (me), as soon as the king has performed the incantation twice, he should at once do (it again). [2]

An act of entreaty related to the lifting of the hand was that of coming to stand and bow before the deity. It is described in this line:

> I am bowed down! I have taken my stand! I have sought for thee! [3]

While bowing before the deity, that is before the image, the suppliant might take hold of the garment or shawl of the deity, which covered the image. Note these words from a prayer to Bau:

> I have turned to thee, I have sought thee, thy ulinnu have I grasped like the ulinnu of my god and goddess. [4]

Compare these words from the prayer of Ashurnasirpal to Ishtar:

> Who seizes the shawl of thy divinity, praying unto thy royal person. [5]

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1 XI
2 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 271.
3 I 21. Cf. IV 23, VII 56 - 57, VIII 15 - 18.
4 King, BMS No. 4 line 29. "The ulinnu mentioned ... was probably a woven scarf or garment in which the figure of the god was draped." BMS p. 27.
5 XVII Rev. 15. Cf. XIII 15.

It may be that the deity wore a garment only for particular occasions, for it appears that some formal ceremony was related to the dressing of the deity in the garment. A priest writes to his king in these words:

> The (religious) service is taking place as follows: [1]
> Dalta (has charge) of the garment of the god for the ceremony.

And another writes about a similar ceremony:

> On the 3rd of Elul there is the dressing of Bel.
> .....
> The king knows that in (this) task I (am alone); no one else is with me (for) the festival of the dressing. [2]

The burning of incense was a very frequent accompaniment to the offering of a prayer. King classes it as the commonest of the actions.[3] The colophon of No. II directs:

> A SA.NA of incense before Tasmitu shalt thou set.

The SA.NA King identifies as a kind of vessel or incense burner.[4] The kind of wood to be burned as incense is sometimes specified. One colophon directs "the offering of incense of harru-wood,"[5] and another names "sarbatu-wood ... sweet-scented woods ... cypress-wood."[6] Another text mentions binu-wood and ukuru-wood.[7]

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1 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 231.
2 Ditto No. 226.
3 King, BMS xxix.
4 King, BMS p. 20. The offering of incense is mentioned also in the colophons of the following prayers: BMS No. 8 (III), 11, 31, and STC pp. 222ff (XI).
5 BMS No. 33 (IX)
6 XI. - On the use of cypress-wood and other articles cf. Pfeiffer, SLA No. 292.
7 VI line 84.

Drink-offerings and libations were also frequent. The second direction in the colophon of No. II is:

The KAS.SAG of drink offering shalt thou fill up and offer.

King concludes that KAS.SAG is the name of the drink-offering itself.[1]

Various objects were offered to the deity, either as gifts or for use in the worship.[2] Among them we find plants mentioned:

May the plants and ... that are set before thee loosen my sin.[3]

Upuntu[4] and Mastakal[5] are two kinds of plant named. A green bough was sometimes used in connection with the prayer:

A green bough shalt thou sprinkle with pure water.[6]

Other objects used or offered directly to the god were: dates, oil, water, honey, butter, corn, gold, alabaster, lapis-lazuli.[7] The repeated offering of food and of a garment as a gift is prescribed in one text:

Seven times the food shalt thou ... A ... of incense shalt thou offer. Place thou there a garment and a gift.[8]

One action appears to be related to the performance of magic. This is the rite of the knotted cord, which King discovers in several of the

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1 King, BMS p. 20. Other texts directing drink-offerings are: BMS No. 1 (I), 6, 8 (III), 11, 12 (VI), 30, 31.

2 "Frequently upon the seals an attendant is represented walking behind the owner and bearing offerings into the temple, and when these had been handed over to the priest, the penitent was ready to be led into the god's presence." King, BRM 210.

3 VI line 76.

4 King, BMS No. 6. (XI)

5 King, BMS No. 11.

6 XI. Note also the colophons of King, BMS No. 12, 31.

7 Colophon of King, BMS No. 12 (VI). See BMS p. 60. Note also No. 11.

8 King, BMS No. 31.

texts. A prayer to Ninib contained this line:

I have bound for thee a cord.[1]

King makes this comment: "It is probable that this rite of binding a cord before the god belongs to the great body of sympathetic magic that plays so important a part in Babylonian sorcery. The spell was in all probability regarded as binding only so long as the cord remained knotted."[2] The act of loosening the cord is, according to King, prescribed in several of the colophons. He suggests that line 99 of No. 12 (VI) be translated "the knot shalt thou loosen,"[3] and he explains that when the priest loosened the knot in the rite the penitent was to utter certain words and then return to his house without looking backward.[4] The injunction not to look backward is found also in the colophon of the long Prayer to Ishtar:

.... and thou shalt not look behind thee.[5]

With the exception of the rite of the knotted cord the acts are all acts of entreaty, which have the purpose of gaining the favor of a deity, rather than acts of force, which are designed to drive out a demon: that is, these actions belong to the realm of religion rather than magic. This conclusion is evidence that the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand are indeed prayers and not mere incantations.

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1 II 27.
2 King, BMS p. 22.
3 King, BMS p. 71.
4 King, BMS xxix. The rite is mentioned also in the colophons of No. 30, 33.
5 XI.

How does it happen that one magical action, that of the knotted cord, has survived? It is possible that King's interpretation here is faulty that what he has "suggested" and regarded as "not improbable"[1] are open to a different interpretation. If we accept King's interpretation as correct, we may regard the magical actions as a hang-over from the older (and still popular) practice of magic, or as Jastrow suggests[2] a "concession" to popular belief.

PRAYERS OF THE LIFTING OF THE HAND The prayers which were prescribed and spoken in time of distress are called Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand from the characteristic gesture which accompanied them.[3] These prayers are closely related, and in some cases similar to, the magical formulas. The close relationship and the uncertainty about their character is shown by the fact that they are sometimes designated as incantations,[4] and sometimes as prayers or hymns.[5] I maintain, as above, that the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand are prayers directed to the deities for help against evil spirits, i.e., religion rather than magic.

The structure of the prayers shows a rather rigid outline, although the prayers vary greatly in length. All the Prayers of the Lifting of the

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1 King, BMS p. 71.
2 Jastrow, RBA 293.
3 See above p. 21. The distinctive colophon line designating these prayers is INIM.INIM.MA ŠUIL.LA. From this comes the term Suilla, frequently applied to these prayers. The Germans give them the title Handerhebungsgebete.
4 "The principal contents of the tablets consist of prayers and incantations to various deities." King BMS xi.
5 Cf. Jastrow, RBA; Harper, ABL.

Hand are built on this outline, and whatever variations are found in the individual prayers do not change the basic nature of the structure. The analysis of this structure, and its comparison with the structure of the Old Testament Psalms, has been carried out by Stummer.[1] King reduces the outline to three principal divisions. His analysis resembles Stummer's but is less thorough.[2]

We suggest the following outline:

(1) Invocation.
  (a) Call.
  (b) Hymn of Praise.
(2) Self-introduction.
(3) Lamentation.
(4) Petition.
(5) Vow.

A brief prayer to Shamash will illustrate the outline in simple form:[3]

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1 Stummer, SP. This is the outline which he gives (p. 9):

(1) Die Anrede.
(2) Die Herlichkeitsschilderung.
(3) Die Selbsteinführung des Beters.
(4) Die Elendsschilderung oder Klage.
(5) Die Bitte.
(6) Der Aufbau des Psalmschluss.

2 "In form and structure they present a general resemblance to each other, each prayer or incantation consisting of three principal divisions, which vary considerably in their comparative length and importance. The beginning of a prayer as a rule consists of an introduction in which the deity addressed is called upon by name, his power or mercy praised, and his special functions or attributes referred to or described. The suppliant then turns to his own condition of distress, and his petitions for help or deliverance form the second main division of the prayer; the conclusion is generally in the form of a short doxology." King, BMS xxii.

3 XIII.

(1) Invocation

(a) Call

Shamash, king of heaven and earth,
Lord of right and righteousness,
Lord of the Anunnaki, Lord of the Igigi,
Whose will no god
Opposes, whose command
No strength hinders.

(b) Hymn of Praise

Shamash, to give life to the dead,
To free the bound,
Stands in thy hand, Shamash.

(2) Self-introduction

I, thy servant, so and so, son of so and so,
Whose god is Marduk, whose goddess
Is Sarpanit,
Before thee ...
I hold thy robe.

(3) Lamentation

On account of the evil of a serpent, which in my house
Has appeared, gliding,
Has done (and) I saw (it)
I am in fear and anguish
And confusion.

(4) Petition

This evil remove from me.

(5) Vow

Thy greatness will I honor,
Will serve thee obediently.
Those who see me
Shall forever obediently
Serve thee.

INVOCATION The prayer begins with the invocation of the deity by name. The opening passage may consist of two parts: a call and a hymn of praise. The name of the god never stands alone in the call, but is always accompanied by his titles of honor or attributes. A common form names the

name of the god first, followed by a row of titles. A prayer to the moon-god begins with this call:

O Sin! O Nannar! mighty one ...[1]

The sun-god is addressed in these words:

O Shamash, child of Anu, the lord.
O Shamash, son who lightest up the darkness,
Lord of Sippar, protector of E-babbar,[2]
Beloved of A-a, the bride who dwelleth in the shining heavens.

The attributes may be given first, followed by the name of the god. A prayer to Nabu begins with this call:

O hero, prince, first-born of Marduk!
O prudent ruler, offspring of Zarpanitu!
O Nabu, Bearer of the tablet of the destinies of the gods,
Director of Isagila!
Darling of Ia, Giver of life!
Prince of Babylon, protector of the living!
God of the hill of dwelling, the fortress of the nations,
the lord of temples.[3]

A prayer addressed to Ninib begins without the name of the God:

O mighty son, first-born of Bel![4]
Powerful, perfect, offspring of Isara.

The call is lengthened into a hymn, which praises the exaltation and accomplishments of the god (lines 13-24). Not until the conclusion of the hymn, just preceding the self-introduction is the name of the god given in one line:

O Ninib, prince of the gods, a hero art thou. (line 25).

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1 I 1.
2 XV 1-9.
3 VII 1-7. Cf. VIII 1-4.
4 II 11-12.

The second section of the Invocation naturally grows out of the extension and amplification of the first section. From calling the names of the deity and mentioning his attributes, the suppliant goes on to praise the deity in a hymn. In some cases the call and hymn are combined.[1] Where they are separated the distinction to be noted is that in the call the deity's attributes are named, while in the hymn his praise is sung for his accomplishments which bring him honor.

The moon-god is praised in his function as the giver of light and the giver of counsel (oracles). Not only men, but the gods are blessed through him.[2] The hymn in a prayer to Nirgal praises the deity for his majesty in treading the lofty places of heaven, honored by gods and men, and holding sway over men and beasts and all created things.[3] Not only the majesty and mighty accomplishments of the god addressed, but his judgment and mercy are praised in a Hymn to Ninib.[4] The longest hymn is found in the long prayer to Ishtar.[5] In spite of its length this Hymn follows closely the typical form with the exception of three lines of questions in the nature of lamentation (lines 27-30). The hymn describes the universal praise of Ishtar; all unite to praise her: temples (14), deities and spirits of heaven and earth (18-21), and mankind (22-25).

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1 For example, XIV 8-13.
2 I 2-8.
3 VIII 5-10.
4 II 19-24.
5 XI 1-41.

Her deeds of mercy are mentioned (40-41), as well as her powerful and warlike nature (36-39).

The purpose of the hymn, as Begrich points out,[1] is to lay a basis for the petition which is to follow. The suppliant wishes to create a favorable mood in the deity and so approaches with flattery - the means always used by the weak in approaching the strong. Notwithstanding the few places where the deity is praised for deeds of mercy, the hymn never rises to the level of personal relationship to the deity. The Babylonian suppliant could not address the deity as "My god," nor could he feel that the god took the personal interest in him that the Hebrew experienced.

SELF-INTRODUCTION Having called upon his god and put him in a favorable mood through the flattery of a hymn, the suppliant next introduces himself. The typical self-introduction is made in a short formula:

> I so and so, the son of so and so, whose god is so and so, whose goddess is so and so,
> Have turned toward thee. 2

The formula in a prayer of Ashurbanipal to Sibziana includes the names in the blanks:

> I, thy servant, Ashurbanipal, the son of his god,
> Whose god is Assur, whose goddess is Assuritu. 3

It may be that the names were included here because our copy of the prayer was made for Ashurbanipal's library.

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1 Begrich, "Die Vertrauensäusserung ...." ZAW XLVI 222-260.
2 XI 21-22. Cf. XIV 14, I 38, XIII 10-15.
3 X 12-13. Cf. XVI 15.

The suppliant may mention the offerings he is now making, or what he has done for the deity.[1] Ashurnasirpal in his prayer to Ishtar[2] introduces himself at great length, telling not only what he has done for the deity in the past (16-21, 32-40) but what she has done for him (23-31).

LAMENTATION Along with his introduction of himself the suppliant may mention the distress out of which he is praying to his god:

> I, thy servant, sorrowful, sighing, and in distress cry unto thee.[3]

The suppliant may ascribe his distress to the working of an evil spirit or demon.

> I so and so, the son of so and so, who am smitten with disease, thy servant,[4]
> Whom the hand of the demon and the breath of the ...

Distress may be ascribed to a deity:

> I, so and so, the son of so and so, am thy servant.
> The ... of god and goddess are laid upon me.
> Uprooting and destruction are in my house.[5]

When the description of distress stands in a section by itself, we recognize it as the lamentation. The suppliant mentions here the distress which he suffers and the cause to which he attributes it. A detailed lamentation is found in the prayer of a man suffering from an evil spirit:

> O Shamash, a horrible speotre for many days
> Hath fastened itself on my back, and will not loose its hold upon me.

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1 II 26-29. Cf. I 20-21, 41.
2 XVII.
3 XI 42. Cf. I 38-41, X 12-19.
4 VII 11-12. Cf. XIV 14-17, XIII 16-20.
5 VIII 11-13.

The whole day long he persecuteth me, and in the night
season he striketh terror into me.
He sendeth forth pollution, he maketh the hair of my head
to stand up.
He taketh power from my body, he maketh mine eyes to start
out.
He plagueth my back, he poisoneth my flesh,
He plagueth my whole body. [1]

This text does not follow the form of a typical Prayer of the Raising of the Hand, but it is included here because of its situation and the nature of its appeal.

A description of sickness, which the suppliant ascribes to the anger of his goddess, is found in the Prayer of Ashurnasirpal to Ishtar.[2] The call begins on the note of lamentation:

The matter which has befallen me, even the sorrows,
in words I will rehearse. (Line 1)

The suppliant king describes the sickness, suffered in spite of faithfulness to his deity (Obv. 42, Rev. 1-14) and concludes with a plaintive "How long?"

How long, O lady, shall sickness cease not and my knees waver?
(Rev. line 14)

The section of lamentation in the long Prayer to Ishtar is very long and detailed.[3] The description of the suppliant's distress is interspersed

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1 "The wandering shade of a man was called 'ekimmu', i.e. spectre, and the sorcerer and the witch claimed to possess the power of casting a spell whereby an 'ekimmu' might be made to settle on a man of its own accord, in the hope that its victim would give it burial in order to free himself from its clutches. We have in the British Museum an interesting incantation which was intended to be recited by a man on whom an 'ekimmu' had fastened himself." King, BRM 45. Cf. BMS No. 53.

2 XVII.

3 XI 46-78.

with frequent repetition of the question, "How long?" The distress includes "sorrow and sighing" (46), "grievous omens" (48), "continuous affliction" (60), "grief and woe" (66), "sickness, disease, ruin, and destruction" (69), "troubles, turning away of the countenance, and fulness of anger" (70), "slaughter, turmoil, and rebellion" (73), "death and misery" (74). This distress the suppliant attributes to "evil bewitchments" (55), "enemies" (56), "the ravenous demon" (59), "the wrath of gods and men" (71), desertion by his god (77).

In a few texts sin is mentioned as a possible cause of the distress suffered. Evil magic and sin are both mentioned in this passage:

> Because of the evil magic, the disease that is not good,
> the iniquity,
> The transgression, the sin that is in my body ... [1]
> Because of the evil spectre that is bound to me and ...

The ideas expressed in the lamentation section of the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand show progress beyond the ideas underlying the magical formulas. The suppliant, in making his prayer to a deity, begins to recognize that his distress may be due to more than the activity of demons or sorcerers. He believes that the deity is able to overcome the evil spirits, and he comes to the conclusion that his distress indicates that his deity is not standing by him, has perhaps forsaken him, or is angry on account of his sin. This chain of reasoning was not constructed all at once, and probably no one individual followed it out; but it indicates the line of thought which led from the primitive belief in magic

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1 X 17-19. Note also the admission of sin in the fragment XII.

to the more developed faith in the deities, which we find in other texts to be studied below.

PETITION The petition is the kernel of the prayer. Here the suppliant pleads for the removal of the distress which he suffers, and here we discover more of what he believes to be the cause of his distress as we see the nature of the petitions for its removal. The close relationship between the prayers and the magical formulas appears in their common purpose to overcome the power of evil spirits, to drive away the curse, to loosen the ban. The prayers take a forward step in that they recognize the independent will of the deity and appeal to his favor. In a few instances the prayer goes further and petitions for the deity's repose from anger, accepting the distress suffered as evidence that he is angry. However, this idea does not properly belong in the range of thought of these texts, but belongs with the Penitential Psalms, as we shall see below.

The simple petition to remove evil, without reference to the favor of the deity, is found in only a few instances. The briefest petition has been noted above:

This evil remove from me.[1]

For the removal of a disturbing evil spirit a man prays to Tammuz with these words:

> Unto the mighty Humba demon foreboding consign him.
> From me may he be detached. Grant me the breath of life.
> And from my body remove him; take him with thee. [2]

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1 XIII 20.
2 XIV 18-20.

With the petition to remove evil may be combined a plea for mercy and favor to insure future success and prosperity. Ashurbanipal prays to Ninlil that her "good breath" may expel his woe and that she may grant him prosperity.[1] From Ninib a suppliant asks for favor, prosperity, pity, the removal of offense and a command of good fortune.[2]

Related to the plea for favor is the petition for intercession, as one deity is asked to plead with another deity on behalf of the suppliant. A prayer to Tasmitu includes these words:

> Before Nabu thy spouse, the lord, the prince, the first-born son of Isagila, intercede for me!
> May he harken to my cry at the word of thy mouth; may he remove my sighing, may he learn my supplication!
> At his mighty word may my god and goddess deal graciously with me![3]

The petition for repose from anger is not common in these texts, but it appears in a few passages. It is found in these words from a prayer to Nergal:

> Truly pity me and hearken to my cries.
> May thine angry heart have rest.
> Loosen my sin, my offense ....[4]

In the long Prayer to Ishtar petition for repose from anger is included along with petitions for removal of evil and for mercy and favor.[5]

VOW The prayer commonly closes with a section in which the suppliant vows to praise the deity and tell of his greatness. The sup-

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1 XVI Rev. 10-13.
2 II 35-40. Cf. III 3-16, IV 10-23, VI 61-68, XVII Rev. 16-24.
3 I 42-44. Cf. these petitions for intercession: V 29-32, VII 13ff.
4 VIII 19-21. Note also the petition in the fragment from a prayer to Marduk: King, BMS No. 21.
5 XI 80-100.

pliant desires to live long in order that he may prolong the praise of his deity:

> I thy servant would live long and prosper to sing thy praise.
> For an omen of days of life thee I seek.
> Thy greatness I will glorify, thy praise I will sing.[1]

Bowing in humility before the deity is another form of worship which the suppliant promises to carry out. This he would do "for ever:"

> For ever may I bow myself in humility before thee.[2]

He promises to tell of the greatness of his god:

> Let me talk of thy greatness, let me bow in humility before thee.[3]

These acts of worship will be carried on in the presence of other people, who will thus be told of the greatness of the deity:

> In the sight of wide-spread peoples may I bow in humility before thee.[4]

The suppliant will praise his god in heaven and earth:

> For after days I will extol thy divinity.
> And thy sovereignty I will magnify in the assembly of gods, councillors of heaven and earth.[5]

From this vow it is only a step to call upon the gods to join in praise:

> May the gods of the world be favorable unto thee; may the great gods delight thy heart.[6]

We find one example in which the suppliant's vow to glorify the god is followed immediately by a hymn which fulfils the vow and sings praise:

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1 XIV 21-23.
2 I 27.
3 VIII 24.
4 VII 67.
5 XVII Rev. 25-26.
6 III 19. Cf. IV 24-26.

That those who behold me in the street may magnify thy name.
And that I may glorify thy godhead and thy might before mankind.
Ishtar is exalted! Ishtar is queen!
My lady is exalted! My lady is queen! [1]
Irnini, the valiant daughter of the Moon-god, hath not a rival.

In one instance material things are vowed. In a two-part prayer for priest and penitent the priest makes for the penitent the customary vow of praise and then adds a vow of material offerings, beginning with these words:

Abundance and plenty may he shower upon thy sanctuary.[2]

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1 XI 101-105.
2 XXI 42. The entire vow includes lines 38-47.

For other examples of the vow see the following: II 41, VI 89-94, X 26-27, XV Rev. 14-19, XVI Rev. 14.

iii Distress Ascribed to the Anger of a Deity

Chapter IV

Penitence

SITUATION We have already noted in connection with the prayers of the lifting of the hand the frequent petition for mercy and favor and a few texts which contain petition for the deity's repose from anger. These petitions indicate that the suppliant ascribed his distress, at least in part, to the disfavor or anger of his deity. As religion became less primitive in its conception of deity and more ethical in its idea of the relationship between gods and men, distress was ascribed more and more to the anger of a deity and less and less to the working of evil demons. This development is shown in a changed reaction toward evil; the individual in distress no longer sought to drive out the evil spirit which was troubling him, but sought to appease the offended god, whose anger was indicated by the distress suffered. The beliefs and practices of magic were given up; the suppliant did not try to force his will on the god, but appealed to the god to relent.[1] Here we are dealing with religion on a higher plane than the belief in magic and the power of evil spirits; but as we have noted above, the belief in magic was not entire-

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1 "The ersagunga or private penitential prayer represents the most spiritual aspect of Sumero-Babylonian worship. They are practically uncontaminated with magic rituals and depend entirely upon prayer and confession." Langdon, BPP v.

ly replaced by religion, and the two practices continued side by side.[1]

The distress suffered was similar to that which men attributed to the activity spirits: sickness, misery, or fear, or any other distress of a personal nature.[2] Physical sickness is indicated by a priest's description of the penitent's misery, which includes: "face ... lips ... hand ... breast."[3] We are not to conclude that the distress was only physical, for all kinds of mental and spiritual misery might be described in physical terms.

ACTION Suffering from the distress indicated above, an individual went through the familiar procedure of seeking out a sanctuary and telling his troubles to the priest. Three persons were involved in the experience: the god, the penitent, and the priest acting as mediator between them. The deity - here conceived as a far higher and holier being than the good spirit appealed to against the demons - could not be approached directly, but only through his chosen messengers, the priests. The priest stood at the side of the penitent, instructing him what to say and emphasizing his sincerity by assurance to the deity and by the addition of his own prayer.

The penitent went if possible to the shrine of the deity whom he believed to be enraged against him, but when he did not know what deity

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1 "As against the incantations which are the outcome of the purely popular spirit, and which are the natural expression of popular beliefs, the penitential psalms seem to represent a more official method of appealing to the gods." Jastrow, RBA 326.

2 Note the descriptive phrases from a penitential psalm to Enlil XXII 14 - 22.

3 XXVI 7-15.

was angry he went to some shrine (probably that of his own) and through the priest there sought to appease the angry one. The search for the shrine of the angry deity is described in these words of a priest's prayer:

> .... thy sanctuary he seeks.
> .... thy sanctuary he seeks.
> He seeks thy sanctuary; he seeks everywhere.
> May thy angry heart return to its place. [1]

Within the sanctuary and accompanying the utterance of his prayer, the penitent wept and humiliated himself in order to appease the deity. These actions of the penitent are described in a priest's prayer:

> Lamenting in his heart, wailing bitterly,
> In lamentation he sits.
> In painful sighings and distress of heart.
> Like a dove distressed he moans night and day.
> Unto his own god, the merciful, like a wild cow he cries.
> Unto his god in prayer he prostrates his face.
> He weeps and ceases not to lament. [2]

In one case the tears are referred to as an offering, comparable to the gifts which a penitent might bring to the sanctuary.[3] The penitent assumed abject attitudes of bowing and crawling, as indicated by these words:

> I kiss the foot of my mother goddess,
> before thee I crawl. [4]

Fasting is mentioned in some texts, and Jastrow goes so far as to say: "The reference to fasting occurs so frequently in these psalms that

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1 XXIX 1-6.
2 XXVIII 1-17.
3 XXII Rev. 3.
4 XXIII Rev. 7. CF XXVI Rev. 1.

one is tempted to conclude that such a bodily castigation was demanded by the ritual of the Babylonians."[1] Note these lines from a penitential psalm to Ishtar:

> Food I ate not, weeping was my bread.
> Water I drank not, tears were my drink.[2]

A reference to fasting in the State Letters described the king as making himself "a beggar" by fasting. The act was combined with the plaintive cry, "How long?"[3]

> The king our lord is gracious. A day has gone by since the king began fasting and has not eaten a morsel: "Until when?" is his inquiry. Today the king should eat no food, the king is a beggar.[4]

One reference to singing, supported by the liturgical character of the penitential psalms themselves, indicates that the penitent may have chanted his prayer in the sanctuary. The reference is this:

> When one sings the melody which appeases thee,
> may thy heart be calmed.[5]

These actions are on a still higher plane than the performances of magic or the actions which accompanied the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand. These actions have in them no suggestion of magic or of any attempt to force the hand of the deity. The complicated ritual of lifting the hand and bringing offerings has given way to simple bowing. The incense,

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1 Jastrow, RBA 320.
2 XXIV 19-21. Cf. XXIII 28-30.
3 Pfeiffer translates the phrase a-di im-ma-te "Until when?" This is the familiar lamentation phrase "How long?" Hebrew עַד מָתַי
4 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 265 lines 7-15.
5 XXII Rev. 5.

the drink-offerings, and the material objects presented have been replaced by purely spiritual offerings. There is no indication that the efficacy of the prayer might be destroyed if the penitent approached or left the sanctuary in disobedience to any set rules. A wholly new action, fasting, is introduced, and this concerns primarily the penitent himself rather than the deity. The intent of these actions seems to be to emphasize the penitent's humiliation and bring about a change in his spirit.

PENITENTIAL PSALMS The words which were spoken to accompany these acts of humiliation were called "Prayers to Quiet the Heart" (Ér. Šá. Ku. Mal).[1] They are commonly called Penitential Psalms, and because the term is so generally recognized we shall use it. The purpose of the Penitential Psalms, as the literal translation of their title shows, was to calm the heart of the angry deity. Two references to these texts are found in the State Letters.

> We shall recite a lamentation for (them); (Sin) will bless the king my lord. [2]

The other reference mentions them in connection with Nam. Búr. Bi. Apparently these were two different ceremonies, both directed for the relief of sickness and the expiation of sin.

> Let them recite lustral incantations and lamentations, against (the day) of sickness (and) pestilence for my lord and my lords the sons of the king, for whatever sin there may be. [3]

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1 This phrase is transliterated in so many ways that the student is at first confused. All of these transliterations have the same meaning:
eršaḫunga - Begrich, ZAW XLVI 222. "Busspsalmen."
Er-sag-gun-ga - Langdon, BPP iv. "Penitential Prayers."
Er-šab-tug-mal - Langdon, SBP xiii. "Penitential Compositions for Individuals."

As compared with the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand, the Penitential Psalms show less adherence to a set structure but more dependence on liturgy, formal entreaties, and refrains of intercession. The general outline of the psalms is this:

(1) Invocation.
(2) Lamentation.
(3) Confession.
(4) Petition.

The outline may be illustrated in this Psalm to Ishtar:[4]

(1) Invocation

She that executes the decrees of the Enlils ...
A pointed dagger, which ...
Creatress of gods, who executes the decrees of the Enlils.
Who causes the verdure to spring up, queen of humanity.
Creatress of all things, who guides all things created.
Amorous mother goddess, to whose side no god can approach.
Majestic queen, whose decrees are pre-eminent.
I will utter a petition, and she who is good will do it for me.

(2) Lamentation

O my queen, from the days of my youth, much have I been bound by calamity.
Food I ate not, weeping was my bread.
Water I drank not, tears were my drink.
My heart was not glad, and my soul was not cheerful.
.....in confidence I walked not.

I weep bitterly by myself.

(3) Confession

Many are my wrong-doings, my mood is embittered.

Er-Scha-Ku-Mal - Weber, LBA 139.
Er-ša-ku-mal - Meek, BA X 11.
2 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 220 lines 14-16.
3 Ditto No. 323 lines 13-17.
4 XXIV

(4) Petition

My queen, learn what I have done, grant repose.
Forgive my sin, pardon me.
May my god, lord of prayer,
prayer to thee speak.
May the mother, my goddess, lady of intercession,
intercession to thee speak.
May Adad, lord of the mountain,
prayer to thee speak.
May Shala, queen of the plain,
intercession to thee speak.
May Ea, ram of the holy city,
prayer to thee speak,
May the mother of him of the far-famed house, Damgalnunna,
intercession to thee speak.
May Marduk, lord of Babylon,
prayer to thee speak.
May his spouse, Zarpanit,
intercession to thee speak.
May the faithful messenger, Nebo,
prayer to thee speak.
May the faithful princess, Tashmetum,
prayer to thee speak.
May the great princess, my lady Nana,
intercession to thee speak.

INVOCATION The opening section here corresponds to the invocations we have studied above, but the deity is never called by name in the opening line. He may be named later in the psalm, and his identity may be indicated by his character as praised in the invocation, but his name is never called directly. The reason for this may be that the suppliant, who feels himself suffering under the anger of a deity, is uncertain as to the exact name of that deity and so directs his invocation in general terms to the angry one. One text is designated as "Penitential Psalm to Any God," and begins:

Of my lord may the anger of his heart return to its place.[1]

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1 XXIII 1. The entire invocation includes lines 1-17. Note the invocation to Ishtar, which describes her without mentioning her name, XXIV 1-13 (p. 44 above).

The invocation may call upon the deity by his many titles of honor. See the heroic names applied to Enlil in the opening lines of a Penitential Psalm,[1] and compare the titles and praise applied to Marduk, found in two columns of a psalm addressed to him.[2]

The mood of the invocation may be that of entreaty, as the angry deity is called on to relent and cease from anger. It is natural in such case to appeal to the merciful nature of the deity. Ishtar is addressed as the "Merciful one," who receives the petition of the sinner and grants life.[3]

LAMENTATION The lamentation is a description of the suppliant's distress, generally brief, and lacking in detail. In general terms, such as "crushing", "affliction", "fear", "sorrow", "calamity", "weeping", the suppliant describes his unhappy state.[4] The description may be given by the priest,[5] or by both priest and penitent,[6] as well as by the penitent alone. The plaint "How long?" is frequently heard:

> As for me, how long, O lord of servants, must I wait?
> It is long enough. [7]

The plaint may be lengthened into a form of liturgy:

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1 XXII lines A-E, 1-5. This is the only example we find of a Penitential Psalm addressed to Enlil. All the other prayers to Enlil are public lamentations, Ér. šem. ma. The terms found in these opening lines are a set form which appears frequently in the public lamentations. See Langdon, SBP. The text XXII is from Langdon, BPP. Zimmern's edition of the same text (BB No. 6), followed by Sayce (HL) does not include these opening lines but begins with line 8 of Langdon's edition.

2 XXX.

3 XXVII 1-12.

4 Note XXII 6-22, XXIV 17-25.

5 XXVIII 1-17. The priests of the Penitential Psalms were known as Kalu priests and belonged to a class distinct from the Ašipu priests of the incantation rituals. See Langdon, BPP v, viii, SBP ix.

O my god,
how long until the rage of thy heart is stilled?
O my mother goddess,
how long until thy hostile heart returns to its place?
O god, known or unknown,
how long until the rage of thy heart is stilled?
O my mother goddess, known or unknown, [8]
how long until thy hostile heart returns to its place?

This liturgical passage is preceded by a passage which laments over the anger of god and goddess (Obverse lines 48-60).

The words of lamentation may be included in a liturgical passage of petition. Note this passage spoken by the priest, [9] in which each line has two parts: the first part description (lamentation), and the second part petition:

With his eyes which shed tears ...
he prays to thee for peace.
With his darkened face,
he prays to thee for peace.
Within his sanctuary where tears cease not
he prays to thee for peace.
With his lips on which a muzzle was laid
he prays to thee for peace.
With his hand which is wearied with trembling
he prays to thee for peace.
With his breast, which like a reed-flute echoes with
the sound of lament,
he prays to thee for peace.

The broken beginning of the Penitential Psalm to a Personal God [11]

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6 XXVII Rev. 7-13.
7 XXX Col III 30-32.
8 XXIII Rev. 21-27.
9 The Text as found in Langdon, BPP 29 does not designate any lines to the priest and is preceded by this statement, "There is no trace of part singing in this prayer." But the list of errata (p. 106) directs that this statement be struck out as error; so I follow Sayce (HL) who designates these lines to the priest.
10 XXVI 5-15.
11 XXV. Langdon is uncertain about the classification of this text. "The prayer ... is not easy to classify. It may possibly be an ordinary su-illa or prayer of the lifting of the hand. Its style resembles rather

is apparently made up of a description of the suppliant's distress, but the lines are so broken that a consecutive translation is not given. The words translated indicate sickness, loneliness, the loss of friends, and the persecution of enemies. This passage, as indicated by the broken lines, is our longest and most detailed lamentation.[12]

CONFESSION The suppliant ascribes his distress to the anger of god or goddess, and this anger he ascribes to some sin by which he has offended the deity. Divine anger caused by sin is indicated in these words from a letter to the king of Assyria:

> A god is angry on account of the sin of the king. The king should perform today his rite of shaving (?) (as an expiation).[13]

The first step in expiation is that the suppliant should confess his sin, hence the almost universal occurrence of confession in the Penitential Psalms.

A deep heart-searching is indicated in the words of confession from the Penitential Psalm to any God.[14] The penitent feels that he has commited many sins:

> O my lord,
> many are my wrong-doings, great are my sins. (line 36)

Yet he is not conscious of any specific sin by which he has offended against any particular god. At the beginning and end of his confession

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the ersagunga's or penitential psalms." Langdon, BW 11n.

12 This passage, the Obverse in Langdon's edition, is not included in Zimmern's edition (BB No. 9), followed by Sayce (HL).

13 Pfeiffer, SLA No. 268 lines 3-6.

14 XXIII. Cf. XXVIII 19ff.

he pleads ignorance of his sin:

> The wrong which I have done I know not. (line 19)
>
> ....
>
> The transgression I have done I know not. (line 47)

He seeks in these words to learn of his offense:

> How have I defamed my god unwittingly?
> Have I transgressed unwittingly against my mother goddess?
> (lines 32-34)

In contrast to this long confession we find some psalms in which the element of confession is reduced to a single line, or to an admission of sin in a few words. Note these examples:

> Many are my wrong-doings, my mood is embittered.[1]
>
> Thou receivest the petition of the sinner.[2]

Two examples of the Penitential Psalm contain no element of confession.[3]

The nature of the sins committed is not indicated in the words of confession, partly because the penitent was often ignorant of his own sin. We might conclude from the terms "defamed" and transgressed"[4] that the sin was ceremonial, a failure to show the proper respect and keep all the required rules, but there is no indication that the conception of sin was limited to ceremonial offenses. King suggests that the conception of sin underwent development: "No doubt in the early periods of their religious development, the offenses which the Babylonians committed were of a formal and ceremonial character. Their sufferings might be due to the infringe-

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1 XXIV Rev. 3.
2 XXVII 5.
3 XXII and XXVI.
4 XXIII 32, 34.

ment of a religious ordinance, or to the eating or drinking of an impure thing, or to an ill-omened word or action. There is no doubt, however, that in the course of time moral considerations tinged their earlier beliefs. Misfortune was still believed to be the result of sin and transgression, but the character of the sin was greatly changed. Injustice and evil-doing were believed to anger a man's god as much as offences against his own peculiar rites, and in this way a man's duty toward his god led to a conception of the duty he owed towards his fellow men."[1]

PETITION The petition is the longest and most significant section of the Penitential Psalm. The purpose of the psalm is to relieve distress by appeasing the angry heart of the deity causing that distress, and it is the petition which is most definitely intended to accomplish that purpose.

In contrast to the relatively free and spontaneous petitions in the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand the petitions in the Penitential Psalms are largely couched in formal language with set phrases and recurring refrains. The most common liturgical refrain is the "child-bearing mother" passage, which, according to Langdon,[2] "invariably" ends the Penitential Psalm.

"Faithfully look upon me," may they say to thee.
"Turn thy neck unto him," may they say to thee.
"May thy heart repose," may they say to thee.
"May thy mind be at peace," may they say to thee.
May thy heart like the heart of a child-bearing mother return to its place.
Like a child-bearing mother, like a begetting father, return to its place.[3]

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1 King, BRM 216.
2 Langdon, BPP iv.
3 XXII Rev. 20-25. Note also XXIV Rev.21-26, XXVI, Rev. 17-22,XXXII Rev. 2-7.

An important element of the petition is intercession, in which one deity is entreated to plead with another in order to bring about release from anger. This element will be recognized in the "child-bearing mother" refrain noted above. In the Penitential Psalm to Enlil[1] this refrain is preceded by a litany of intercession. The lines are in couplets: the first line of each couplet ends with the refrain:

.... utter petition unto thee,

and the second line ends with the refrain:

.... speak intercession unto thee.

Line 5 is unique with the refrain:

.... may thy heart be calmed.

The following deities are called upon to intercede with Enlil: "the Anunnaki," "his god," "Ninurasha," "the queen of Nippur," "Ea," "Damgalnunna," "Nebo," "the bride, first daughter of Urasha," "Anmarur," "Ashrat," With the exception of lines 1 and 3, the other couplets (8, 10; 12, 13; 16, 17; 18,19) name a god in the first line and a goddess in the second line.

A similar litany is found in a Penitential Psalm to Ishtar.[2] Here the two refrains are:

.... prayer to thee speak.

.... intercession to thee speak.

All the couplets but the last (19, 20), which names two goddesses, name first a god and then a goddess.[3]

1 XXII.
2 XXIV Rev. 9-20.
3 Cf. the litany of intercession XXVI 7-16.

In addition to these formal litanies we find petitions for forgiveness,[1] repose and release from anger,[2] mercy, peace and rest.[3] In no case is a direct reference made to the evil suffered, and no direct petition is offered to remove it. The petition is for a right attitude on the part of the deity and a right relationship to the penitent, for when this is established all will be well.

CONCLUSIONS In the Babylonian texts which we have studied we have distinguished in general three different reactions of an individual toward his distress. In all three the distress suffered is the same: chronic or acute sickness, accident, or other personal misfortune. The simplest reaction is to ascribe the distress directly to the activity of evil spirits, or to a malicious witch or sorcerer who has sent evil spirits, and to attempt to remedy the distress by magical manipulations and a magical formula. The actions and the formulas are distinctive. The actions are directed against the evil and against the person thought to be causing it, and they are symbolical in character, representing the attempt to remove the evil and restrain or destroy the person causing it.[4] The formulas are closely related to the actions and depend for their efficacy on correct form and correct repetition.

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1 XXIV Rev. 7
2 XXII 26-36.
3 XXVI 17-25.

We find two texts in which a vow is spoken: XXIII Rev. 49 and XXV Rev. 27-28. These are exceptions rather than the rule, and the typical Penitential Psalm does not contain a vow.

4 See above pp. 8ff.

The second reaction ascribes the distress to the activity of evil spirits and seeks to drive them out by appeal to a good spirit, a god or goddess. The penitent assumes that the deity is more powerful than the evil spirits and can drive them out if he is favorable. So by actions and prayers of entreaty the penitent tries to win the favor of the deity to his side against the evil.[1] The Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand (Šuilla) are representatives of this type of prayer, but other prayers, not designated by this title, were offered in the same experience.

The third reaction ascribes the distress to the anger of a deity who has been offended and seeks to relieve the distress by appeasing him. The penitent makes no reference to evil spirits: if they still have a place in his belief, they are only subordinate powers, dominated by the deities and allowed to trouble a man only when some enraged deity permits them or sends them as punishment. The actions which characterize this experience are actions of humiliation, designed to humble the penitent and express the remorse he suffers from his sin.[2] The prayers spoken are expressions of penitence, designed by personal entreaty and by intercession of other gods to appease the anger of the enraged deity and to secure his favor again. The Penitential Psalms (Ér. Šà. Ku. Mal) belong to this experience.

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1 See above pp. 21ff.
2 See above pp. 40ff.

THE LITERATURE OF ISRAEL

Chapter V

The Texts for Comparison

The Babylonian texts which we have been studying are found on scattered clay tablets which have been unearthed by archaeologists and collected, edited, and translated by recent scholars. The comparable texts in the religious literature of Israel are found in a ready-made collection, the Book of Psalms, which was long ago collected, edited, and translated into succeeding vernaculars. It is safe to assume that, just as the collection of Babylonian texts is not complete because many tablets remain undiscovered or have been destroyed, so the collection of Hebrew texts is incomplete because many were not included in the canonical collection and were lost; but with this assumption and with the history of the Book of Psalms as a collection we are not concerned here.

Our purpose is to study the lamentation experience in the Old Testament for comparison with the similar experience in the Babylonian literature. We shall study the experience in the Book of Psalms, which contains many individual lamentations. A few lamentation prayers will be found outside of the Psalter, and in the historical and prophetic books we shall find many passages which describe an experience of lamentation without including the words of the prayer if one was uttered.

These passages will throw light on the experience in the Psalter by showing the situations of distress and the actions performed.

Chapter VI

Magic in the Psalms

We have seen that the belief in evil spirits played so large a part in the life of the Babylonians that certain actions were regularly prescribed to overcome them, and collections were made of incantations and prayers to remove them. Did this belief play any part in the lamentation experience of the Old Testament? It is evident that at the time the collection of the Psalter was made no such belief was widespread among the Hebrews, since their literature includes no collection of incantations against evil. The Old Testament contains no texts comparable to the Maqlu, the Shurpu, or the Evil Demon Series.

MOWINCKEL'S THEORY While no complete magical texts are found, allusions to magic may be present, and Sigmund Mowinckel claims to have found many such in the frequent reference to the enemies of the psalmist.[1] The term "workers of iniquity" (פעלי און) gives him his clew. Since awen suggests a unique kind of evil, that caused by evil spirits, or demons,[2] then those who work it must be persons who have the power of evil spirits, that is, sorcerers or witches. After thus establishing the nature of the enemies of the psalmist, Mowinckel further shows that they were regarded as the underlying cause of the evil complained of in the

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1 Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien I.

2 " און hat somit als grundlegende Bedeutung weder Falschheit, noch Schaden, der einem anderen gemacht ist, sondern Zauberkraft, Zauber, Zauberei." Mowinckel, P I 33.

lamentation psalms. The fact that the psalmist prays first to be freed from his enemies, and almost never prays in definite words for healing from sickness, shows his belief that the enemies have caused his sickness and that the sickness will disappear with the enemies.[1] Prayers against the enemies of the psalmist are then to be understood as prayers against evil magic, comparable to the Babylonian incantations and prayers against magic.

We have no intention here of going into an extensive discussion of Mowinckel's case or of attempting a thorough refutation of it. His suggestions have met with more opposition than approval,[2] one criticism being that his assumptions are too bold and his generalizations too broad. A further criticism we may point out from our studies above: Mowinckel makes much of the parallelism between the psalms against the "workers of iniquity" and the anti-magical psalms of the Babylonians, but he fails to note that not all of the Babylonian texts are of the same type and not all are anti-magical. He says in regard to the Babylonian literature: "Die gesamte Material durchzuarbeiten habe ich nicht für nötig gehalten. Zwischen sogen. Zaubertexten und Klage- und Busspsalmen (so Jastrow) habe ich nicht unterschieden, weil ich diese Unterscheidungen für prinzipiell falsch halte."[3] By thus disregarding the diversified nature of the Babylonian literature he undermines the comparison which he attempts to draw.

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1 See Mowinckel, P I 11.
2 Note Barnes, P lxxi ff., Gunkel, EP 200ff.
3 Mowinckel, P I 82.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MAGIC We shall be on a firmer basis for comparison if we follow more closely the Babylonian texts and apply to the biblical psalms the criteria deduced from the Babylonian. We noted above the use of amulets and talismans for protection against evil spirits; and the magical ceremonies for driving out the evil spirits were characterized by actions symbolizing their destruction and by formulas which depended more upon repetition of the words in correct form than on the meaning of the words. Prayers against the activity of evil spirits offered petition that the deity would overcome the evil effects and were accompanied by actions designed to secure the favor of the deity.

AMULETS AND TALISMANS The use of amulets and talismans as protection against evil spirits is only hinted at in the Old Testament. The ear-rings worn by Jacob's followers[1] were probably looked on as articles of magic or superstition, for they were hidden away with the "Foreign gods" which were condemned. The "fringes"[2] which were prescribed in Num. 15:38 were knotted cords; and since knots were widely used as protective amulets against evils, we may assume that originally these "fringes" were worn as protection against evil spirits.[3] These vague references point to the remnant of a practice which had largely passed out of use by Old Testament times, and which came in time to be

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1 Gen. 35:4.
2 צִיצִת Note the parallel passage in Deut. 22:12, which prescribes גְּדִלִים twisted threads.
3 See Oesterley and Robinson, HR 74.

condemned as superstitious. Amulets continued to be work for protection and for ornament for a long time, even into the Christian era.

SYMBOLICAL ACTIONS The presence of magical actions in the psalms, even in minute remnants, is acknowledged by very few commentators, but it will reward us to search out the possible traces and compare them with similar manipulations in the Babylonian rituals. We will look first at the actions and the words which accompanied their performance, and then at magical formulas which were apparently spoken without any actions. The most extensive work on this subject is that of Nicolsky, whose monograph, Spuren Magischer Formeln in den Psalmen,[1] makes many bold interpretations of obscure passages.

In Psa. 58:7-9 the pictures of destruction may be taken as only a graphic description of the desired destruction of the wicked, but Nicolsky regards them as symbolical magic.

Let them flow away as water. (7a)[2]

Im sympathetic magic water was poured out on the ground to flow away and disappear, as the enchanter desired his enemies to disappear.[3]

Let them come to death on their way. (7b)[4]

This clause gives no suggestion of magical manipulations.

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1 Beiheft zur ZAW XLVI (1927).

2 As noted in the preface, all quotations from the Psalter in this chapter are the author's translations, following Nicolsky and other commentators.

3 Cf. Tallquist, Maqlu I 116-119.

4 Read יִתְהַלְּכוּ לְבוּת דַּרְכָּם

As grass may they be cut down. (7c)[1]

Here is opportunity for more sympathetic magic, the cutting of grass.

As melting wax shall they pass away. (8a)[2]

The melting of wax images is a very common practice in sympathetic magic.[3]

As the untimely birth of a woman shall they not see the sun. (8b)

An untimely birth was regarded in close association with evil spirits, and so was quickly destroyed. So may the enemy be quickly destroyed.[4]

Before your pots are ready,
Shall the thornbush scatter you by its waving. (9)

Nicolsky finds in this obscure line a further hint of magic. The psalmist believes that his enemies have already started to cook their enchantment brew, but in this moment they will be stopped by the power of his incantation. He will stop them by waving a thorn bush in the direction where he believes them to be at work. The thorn bush (סִירִים) was thought to have a particular magic power, especially against evil brews of herbs.[5]

The enemies of the psalmist, against whom his words are directed, are indicated in verses 3-5. They are described as "wicked" (רָשָׁע), as forsaking the truth and speaking lies, and as having poison like the poison of serpents (v. 3). Apparently they have resisted the whispered

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1 Read כְּדֶשֶׁא חָצִיר יִתְּדָלֶל
Cf. note in Kittel, BH.

2 The word שַׁבְּלוּל translated "snail" is a hapaxlegomenon. The reading of LXX is better here κηρος = שַׁעֲוָה - wax.

3 See above p. 11.

4 See Nicolsky, op. cit. 34.

5 " " " " 38.

charms of the enchanters[1] and the attempted charm by the ritual of tying knots:

.... charming with the charms of the wise. (v. 5)[2]

The exact character of these evil-doers is not apparent, but the impression gained from these few phrases is that they were sorcerers or persons possessing power over evil spirits.

Verse 6 is a prayer against them, that Yahweh will destroy their power as the teeth of lions are broken. If our interpretation of verses 3-9 is correct, sympathetic magic was performed against them: pouring out of water, cutting of grass, melting of wax.[3] While the actions were performed, magic formulas were spoken against them. In later use the simple formulas had added to them other curses: verses 7b, 8b, and 9, which are more literary, less naïve and direct. The beginning and conclusion of Psa. 58, which introduce the idea of judgment, are much later than the incantation and come from the period of the kingdom. The introduction of Yahweh (v. 6) is the work of the redactor who accomodated the old form to the official usage.[4]

Psa. 141 has caused the exegetes much trouble and has lent itself to many varied interpretations. Some meaning is given to the "enigmatic

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1 מְלַחֲשִׁים pi. participle of לחש the original meaning of which is to whisper.

2 This interpretation of חוֹבְרֵי חֹבֶר is based on the original meaning of חבר to bind. On the tying of knots see above p. 10.

3 Cf. the actions to accompany the utterance of charms in the fifth and sixth tablets of the Shurpu Series. See above p. 11.

4 See Nicolsky, op. cit. 41.

and figurative language"[1] by Nicolsky's exposition. He finds three parts, related in the respect that each is concerned in one manner or another with the struggle against evil spirits or sorcerers and the affliction they cause. The three parts are:

(1) An incantation prayer against the entrance of evil spirits through the mouth (verses 1-4).

(2) An incantation with remaining traces of magic ritual for driving evil spirits out of a sick person (verses 5-7).

(3) A prayer against incantations and other magical manipulations (verses 8-10).

Verses 1-4 are easily interpreted as a prayer against sin in thought, word, and deed; but we must be wary of reading back a meaning from later, ethical ideas. The prayer is rather a prayer against the entrance and the influence of evil. It was to be uttered with the evening sacrifice and accompanied by an incense offering and the lifting up of the hands (v. 2). Here we are reminded of the Babylonian Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand and of the frequent mention of incense to accompany them.[2]

The "watch" before the mouth is not to be taken spiritually, but literally, that Yahweh's good spirit will prevent the entrance of evil spirits.

> Place, O Yahweh, a watch before my mouth.
> a guard at the door of my lips. (v. 3)

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1 Kirkpatrick, P 796.
2 See above pp. 20, 23.

Nicolsky finds a basis for this interpretation in the primitive belief that spirits of all kinds enter the body through openings, especially the mouth and nose. The primitive African will not sleep with his mouth open, and the Russian crosses himself when he yawns.[1]

In verse 4 the heart is to be interpreted in a physiological sense, and the prayer is for the protection of life and health, against which the sorcerers work by means of the evil word. The word מַלְעַבּוֹתָם commonly translated "Dainties," comes from the root לעם which we find below in v. 6, where it has a magical reference. Here it means the food by which evil spirits might enter a man. Against this possible contamination the psalmist prays for protection in these words:[2]

> Deliver not my heart into the power of the evil word,
> in order that they may be able to work evil in a criminal way,
> the men who work mischief,
> and in order that I may not eat of their food. (v. 4)

The purpose of the prayer contained in these verses (1-4) may be compared with that of the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand. It is a prayer to the deity, accompanied by actions to win his favor, to direct his power on behalf of the suppliant against the evil spirits which trouble him.

Verses 5-7 are particularly obscure. Nicolsky finds a key to their meaning in the concluding words of v. 6 כִּי לַעַבְרוֹ. The root לעם

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1 See Nicolsky, op. cit. 48. Cf. Gen. 2:7, 2 Kg. 4:34.

2 Ditto 50-52. He concludes: "Somit enthüllt sich V. 3-4 als ein Gebet um Schutz vor bösen Geistern, Zauberern, vor ihren 'bösen Worten,' und vor jeglicher Unreinheit, die mit ihnen im Zusammenhange steht. Also handlet es sich um ein talismanisches Gebet."

which is infrequent in the Old Testament is commonly taken in the sense of "sweet" or "pleasant," but here it has another meaning. Here it means "enchanting" or "bewitching," having a particular attraction. Nicolsky says in his interpretation: "Die Feinde müssen auf die Wörter des Dichters hören d.h. sich ihnen unterordnen, da sie bezaubernde, unüberwindliche Kraft besitzen."[1] The ones indicated in verses 6,7 who will be compelled to hear these enchanting words, are evil spirits or sorcerers.

The meaning of verse 6a is illuminated by a ritual by which impurity or evil spirits were taken out of the children of Israel and sent back to their place of origin in the wilderness. This was the ritual of the Day of Atonement, particularly the process prescribed in Lev. 16:10. The goat which was chosen "for Azazel" (or for removal) received the sins of the people when the hands of the high priest were laid on his head. This goat was then led away into the wilderness; and to make certain that it would not return, the man who led it conducted it to a steep place called Ṣuḳ, where it was thrown backwards over the edge of the cliff and dashed to pieces on the rocks.[2] Nicolsky sees in this ritual a magical character. It is the means by which the impurity, i.e. the evil spirits, called forth from the people, is carried out on the goat and thrown down in the wilderness. The curse of v. 6 is that by the power of the psalmist's enchanting words the evil spirits which

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1 Nicolsky, op. cit. 45.
2 See article "Atonement, Day of" by S. R. Driver and H. A. White in HBD.

trouble him may likewise be driven out and carried back to their origin. The precise meaning of the word שֹׁפְטֵיהֶם R.V. "Judges", is not clear. Nicolsky translates it "Gebieter," "Masters." It may refer to the sorcerers, who have sent the evil spirits against the psalmist. It appears that the sorcerers, as the psalmist's enemies, are the ones against whom is directed the curse of v. 7, which is related to the curse of v. 6. The scapegoat breaks himself in pieces by falling on the rocks. So may the bones (that is, the broken bodies) of the enemies be scattered, as sods which are torn from the earth and turned up by the plow. The "jaws of Sheol" are the proper place where evil spirits should return and the enchanters be destroyed.

> As the plowman turns up (the sods) on the earth,
> so may their bones be scattered before the jaws of Sheol. (v. 7)

We now go back to v. 5, and find that it too is concerned with the removal of evil spirits. Three means are indicated by which evil spirits may be driven out of a sick person. The first is beating on the head:

> May the righteous smite me and judge me. (5a)

A common usage among primitive peoples is for the enchanter, physician, or priest to force an evil spirit to leave a sick man by beating him on the body or head. The second method is the anointing with oil:

> Oil on the head - may my head not refuse it. (5b)

Washing or anointing with water or oil was a common means of removing evil spirits.[1] The third means is prayer:

> For my prayer is still against their evil. (5c)

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1 See Morganstern, DS 61. Cf. above p 12.

The words of prayer to be spoken are verses 6,7, which follow immediately, and which are directed against the evil spirits and enchanters.[1]

The conclusion of the psalm is a prayer for protection, taking refuge in Yahweh. The psalmist prays concerning nets and snares (v. 9) and concludes with the wish that the evil doers may receive the fate they have prepared for others. They have performed magical manipulations: may their manipulations turn against them. The three parts of the psalm are now seen as independent texts on magic, two prayers and an incantation, which have been loosely strung together, perhaps for a collection of ecclesiastical magical texts.

MAGICAL FORMULAS We have seen that a magical formula consists of a few words, the repetition of which in correct form insures power or protection. A few such formulas are found in the Psalter. We shall look first at brief formulas which give protection.

Psa. 91, which on first glance seems to be merely a psalm of trust, appears on more careful reading to be a description of various kinds of evil from which Yahweh will protect an individual. We find in it a talismanic formula, the repetition of which will insure Yahweh's

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1 "Somit erfahren v. 5-7 volle Aufhellung - es handelt sich in ihnen um ein Bruchstück aus dem Rituale der Austreibung böser Geister bei Kranken. V. 5a, 5b, und 5c sind die vom Kranken in der Zeit auszusprechenden Formeln, in welcher der Priester die entsprechenden Handlungen vornimmt: den Kranken schlägt, sein Haupt mit Öl bestreicht und für ihn die Beschwörung (v. 6,7) hersagt." Nicolsky, op. cit. 47.

protection against distress. The formula is given twice: in a long and a short form:

> He is my refuge and my fortress;
> My God, in whom I trust. (v. 2)
>
> For thou, O Yahweh, art my refuge. (v. 9)

Verses 1,2, are spoken by the one using the formula. In verses 3-13 the priest gives instructions, explaining the meaning of the formula. Verses 14-16 are an oracle of Yahweh, added to the psalm to give more meaning to the formula.

The opening lines set the scene with the trust in Yahweh's protection:

> He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High
> Abideth under the shadow of the Almighty. (v. 1)

This is a promise of protection by night, for the word translated "abideth" (from the verb לון) means originally to pass the night.[1] Protection by night is significant, for night is the time during which evil spirits are especially active.[2]

Verses 3-6 describe various evils from which the formula gives protection:

> He will deliver thee from the net of the trapper,
> And from the destructive word. (v. 3)[3]

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1 Cf. Gen. 19:2.
2 See above p. 6. Cf. Oesterley, FAP 282.
3 The rendering "word" follows LXX and involves only a change in the vocalization of MT.

The net is commonly employed by sorcerers in magical manipulations.[1] The destructive word is the curse of a sorcerer, which causes sickness.

> Thou shalt not be afraid of the night-terror,
> Or of the arrow that flieth by day. (v. 5)

Oesterley quotes the Midrash on the Psalms in comment on this verse: "'There is a harmful spirit that flies like a bird and shoots like an arrow.' This, according to traditional Jewish belief, was the 'night-terror.'"[2] The "arrow" is not that which a man would shoot from his bow, but refers to the scorching ray of the sun, "the result of which, sunstroke, headache, or faintness, was believed to be due to a demon, like all sickness."[3]

> Of the pestilence (דֶּבֶר) that goeth about in darkness,
> Or the destruction (קֶטֶב) that wasteth at noonday. (v. 6)

These two are evil spirits, not mere personifications of evil. Deber is compared to the Babylonian demon Namtar, who goes about at night plaguing a man like the pestilence.[4] Qeteb is described as a demon in the Midrash on the Psalms, quoted by Oesterley.[5]

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1 Note these lines: They have used all kinds of charms .....
To overpower me as in a net.
Tallquist, Maqlu II lines 148ff. See above p. 10.

2 Oesterley, FAP 283.

3 Oesterley and Robinson, HR 73.

4 See Oesterley, FAP 285. Weber, D 16. CT XVII pl. 16.

5 "The poisonous Qeteb was covered with scales and with hair, and he sees only out of one eye, the other is in the middle of his heart; and he is powerful, not in the darkness, nor in the sun, but between darkness and the sunshine." Oesterley, FAP 286. Cf. Nicolsky, op. cit. 17-19.

A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
To thee not shall come nigh .... (v. 7)

Nicolsky suggests that the missing subject of the verb is death.[1]

No evil (רע) shall befall thee,
And plague (נגע) shall not approach thy tent. (v. 10)

These two are taken as names of animistic beings.[2]

Verses 11-12 describe how Yahweh sends out his good spirits to oppose the evil spirits and protect those who know his name.

Upon the reptile[3] and the cobra shalt thou tread,
Thou shalt trample under foot the young lion and the serpent. (v. 13)

These animals are to be taken as demonic beings. In ancient thought lions and serpents were especially associated with demons.[4]

The first part of the psalm, which we have just studied (verses 1-13), is the part which deals with the dangers of evil spirits. Nicolsky regards this as coming from the time of the wilderness wandering and early settlement, when men were constantly in danger.[5] The three remaining verses are an oracle in which Yahweh promises to come and help the man to whom the oracle is given, the one who knows his name (v. 14b) and the formula of protection (given in verses 2 and 9). The present form of the psalm is much later than the nomadic period and comes from a literary time when the old literature was reworked for the cultus

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1 Nicolsky, op. cit. 22.
2 Nicolsky, op. cit. 22.
3 In place of פתן read פתן following LXX ἀσπίδα a venomous serpent, probably a cobra. See Briggs, P II 282.
4 See Oesterley, FAP 287.
5 Nicolsky, op. cit. 23.

of the Jerusalem temple, but enough is left of the old words and phrases to indicate an early belief in evil spirits which worked secretly to bring sickness and destruction on a man, and against which men sought protection by appeal to the name and the power of Yahweh.

Psa. 59 is a psalm against enemies, and the nature of these enemies and their work leads us to the conclusion that they are night-demons or evil spirits. They go about the city at night and howl like dogs (v. 6). We have already noted the dangers of night as the time when demons are especially active. Dogs were looked upon with horror, and their howling at night would strike terror and make men think of evil spirits and offer prayers against them, not knowing whether the noise was dogs or spirits. These enemies spit out from their mouth something which is dangerous as a sword (v. 7). This may refer to the spittle, which is regarded as an indication of the spirit, and which plays an important part in magic. Against these enemies the psalmist appeals to Yahweh for help in the opening words of the psalm, and against them he speaks a brief incantation which will insure protection.

> My strength, I will give heed to thee;
> For God is my high tower. (v. 9)

This formula is repeated in v. 17. The remainder of the psalm continues as a prayer to Yahweh for help, concluding with a vow (verses 16,17). In its present form it is an ecclesiastical composition, but it includes the formula from an old incantation.

CURSES Similar to the formulas for protection are the formulas for destruction, that is, the curses which are hurled against enemies

and which rely for their efficacy on repetition in correct form. Psa. 69 is a lamentation against enemies and includes a curse in the form of an incantation against them (verses 21-28). The incantation is particularly against their enchantment brew in food or drink, and its purpose is that their own works may come upon themselves. Darkening of eyes and shaking of legs are the first indications of poisoning (v. 23). This incantation is older than the body of the psalm, but the psalmist included it as an instrument against his enemies. The incantation is related to Yahweh and to the remainder of the psalm by verse 26, and Nicolsky suggests that the verse is an editorial addition for this purpose.[1]

In a similar way an old incantation is included in Psa. 109, in verses 6-20. The contrast between verses 6-20 and the remainder of the psalm is so obvious that it demands some explanation. One interpretation, supported by Gunkel[2] and Kirkpatrick[3], is that in these verses the psalmist singles out the leader of a gang of enemies and pours out imprecations on his head. To regard this section as words of description about the enemies, quoting the curses which they have spoken against the psalmist, explains the third person singular as the object of the curses and relieves the psalmist of the responsibility of uttering such bitter curses. This interpretation is advanced by

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1 Nicolsky, op. cit. 87.
2 Gunkel, P 478.
3 Kirkpatrick, P 651.

Stummer,[1] Barnes,[2] and others. Nicolsky's explanation is that these verses are an old incantation included in the psalm. The later parts (verses 1-5, 21-31) constitute an individual prayer for release from sickness (v. 24) which is regarded as caused by evil spirits or sorcerers. In this are included words of an incantation to remove Yahweh's hand from the one cursed and deliver him over to the power of the evil spirits.[3] Objections may be raised to both of these last two explanations, but both have the advantage of dealing realistically with the shift in number and the change in tone between verses 6-20 and the remainder of the psalm. Both reach the conclusion that the curses are independent of the remainder, quoted by the psalmist, either from his enemies or from an older incantation. Some hint of curses with magical power is discovered in either case.

CONCLUSIONS The presence of these traces of symbolical actions, magical formulas, and curses indicates a period in the development of Hebrew religion when priests of magic performed magical actions and recited incantations for or with persons in distress, when men warded off evil by repeating powerful formulas, and when men resorted to the use of curses to attack the enemies whom they believed to be secretly troubling them. But the fact that the element of magic is found only in traces and not in entire psalms, and the careful editing which has attempted to give a religious emphasis to every phrase indicate that at

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1 Stummer, SP 86-88.
2 Barnes, P 530.
3 Nicolsky, op. cit. 71.

the time the Psalter was compiled the beliefs and practices of magic lay far back in history. The official religion, out of which came the book of Psalms, used a few texts which were originally magical, but in the official religion there was no cultus of magic and no general reliance on the practices of magic by individuals in distress. Whereas in Babylonia the popular belief in magic was so strong that many magical texts were preserved, in Israel the reaction against magic was so strong that the magical texts were lost or destroyed and only traces of them remain.

Chapter VII

Situations of Lamentation.

We have found in the Old Testament psalms more contrast than similarity to the magical formulas of the Babylonians. How do the Old Testament psalms compare with the Babylonian prayers, which are directed to secure the aid of the deities against evil spirits, and the penitential psalms, which are offered to propitiate the anger of the enraged deity? To seek an answer to this question we shall study the lamentation psalms and the experience of lamentation which lies behind them. At the outset we cannot separate the psalms, setting aside one group to compare with the Babylonian prayers and another group to compare with the Babylonian penitential psalms.

The lamentation literature of the Old Testament includes both national and individual lamentations. The national lamentations are public prayers which arise out of national calamity or public distress.[1] With these we are concerned only as they illustrate or clarify the forms and practices of individual lamentation. The individual lamentations are the ones which we shall study for the comparison with the Babylonian literature.[2]

IN THE PSALMS The individual lamentations arise out of a situation of personal distress: the oppression of enemies, sickness,

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1 See Gunkel, EP 117ff. "Die Klagelieder des Volkes."
2 Ditto 172ff. "Die Klagelieder des Einzelnen."

loneliness, or discouragement. When we attempt to be specific on the situation we encounter difficulties in interpreting the psalmist's language. Figures of speech are so common and so vivid that it is difficult to tell when the psalmist is describing his actual condition and when he is drawing on his imagination for figures to describe his condition. For example, these two lines probably describe bodily sickness:

> There is no soundness in my flesh ... [1]
> Neither is there any health in my bones.

But these words describe the reproaches of enemies and have no reference to sickness:

> As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach me.[2]

Complaint over enemies is practically universal. Whatever else the psalmist complains of, he includes somewhere in his lament a reference to those who reproach him: whether unfriendly foreigners, scornful strangers, or reproachful and faithless friends. With the exception of Psa. 51, a deeply spiritual psalm, every one of the lamentation psalms makes some reference to the psalmist's enemies or to the wicked who trouble him. Reproaches accompanied every other form of distress since sickness and suffering were regarded as signs of divine disfavor and men were quick to scorn those who appeared to be chastised

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1 Psa. 38:3.

2 Psa. 42:10. Barnes says in comment: "There is no 'sword' here. Rather, As with a breaking into my (very) bones. The bodily frame of the Psalmist seems to give way under the taunts of his tormentors." Barnes, P 214.

of God. It would appear that in some cases the enemies were the primary cause of distress, and in other cases their reproaches were only secondary.

To the psalmist in his distress it appears that a great crowd of enemies persecutes him, that he is surrounded with them. Note these words:

> Jehovah, how are mine adversaries increased!
> Many are they that rise up against me.
> Many there are that say of my soul,
> There is no help for him in God. [1]

> Mine enemies would swallow me up all the day long;
> For they are many that fight against me. [2]

> Many bulls have compassed me;
> Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
> They gape upon me with their mouth,
> As a ravening and a roaring lion. [3]

In perfect sincerity the psalmist regards his enemies as the enemies of God.

> For strangers are risen up against me,
> And violent men have sought after my soul:
> They have not set God before them. [4]

Sickness is very often one of the factors in the psalmist's distress. We find no example of a psalm dealing exclusively with sickness and making no mention of enemies; but this is not surprising, since sickness was regarded as a sign of Yahweh's disfavor or punishment and often caused accusations, scorn, and estrangement of friends. These words

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1 Psa. 3:1-2.
2 Psa. 56:2.
3 Psa. 22:12-13.
4 Psa. 54:3. Cf. 86:14.

from Psa. 6 describe physical sickness, aggravated by taunts and insults:

> I am wearied with my groaning,
> every night make I my bed to swim,
> I melt away my couch with my tears.
> Mine eye has fallen in from vexation, [1]
> it has grown old with the insulting of my foes.

The psalmist is so sick that he feels himself in danger of death, and the thought of separation from God in Sheol terrifies him (v. 5).[2]

Another cause of distress is the psalmist's distance from the sanctuary, by reason of which he is denied the privilege of worship in the house of God, detained in an unfriendly land among unfriendly people. This situation is implied in Psa. 42:4,6; 43:1-2 and in the cry from afar sounded in the first two verses of Psa. 61. From a distance the author of Psa. 63 recalls how he has looked upon God in the sanctuary. He suffers from "homesickness for the worship of God."[3]

> O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee:
> My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,
> In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.
> So have I looked upon thee in the sanctuary,
> To see thy power and thy glory. [4]

The danger of enemies is implied in v. 9.

IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS For the most part the lamentation experiences described or alluded to in the historical books are public lamentations, but a few of them are individual or bear a close enough relation to the individual lamentations to interest us.

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1 Psa. 6:6-7. Cheyne, P 13.
2 Other psalms indicating sickness are 13, 22, 38.
3 Cheyne, P 172, quoting Julius Hammer, "Heimweh nach dem Dienst Gottes."
4 Psa. 63:1-2.

We have seen that the attacks and reproaches of enemies figured largely in the psalms of individual lamentation. The enemies of the nation were the personal enemies of the king (as well as of the nation's god), and the reaction of the king to an invasion was like that of an individual to his personal enemies. Thus when Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah, King Hezekiah reacted to the distress in the typical manner of the lamentation experience.[1] The account describes two invasions, both of which failed to enter the city of Jerusalem. The immediate cause of the king's distress was in each case the boasting utterance of Rabshakeh, the representative of Sennacherib.[2] In the first instance of invasion Hezekiah offered no prayer, but he went through actions of lamentation and sent messengers to Isaiah the prophet (2 Kg. 19:1,2), from whom he received an assurance in the word of God that the invading army would turn back (19:6,7). In the second instance Hezekiah went into the house of God (the temple) and laid the boasting letter before God as the Psalmist often quoted the boasting words of his enemies.[3] The prayer which he offered (19:15-19) follows rather closely the outline of an individual lamentation.[4]

Personal distress and reproach combined in the lamentation experience of Hannah, the mother of Samuel.[5] A feast where others were

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1 See 2 Kg. 18:3 - 19:37. Isa. 36,37.
2 Cf. Psa. 74:10. 94:4-7.
3 Cf. Psa. 64:1-6, 70:2,3.
4 See below. Note also Jehoshaphat's prayer on the invasion of the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chron. 20:1-30).
5 1 Sam. 1.

happy was an occasion of sorrow for her because she was childless and was taunted by Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah. In her grief she went into "the temple of Jehovah"[1] and wept, and as she prayed her lips moved in silence. She vowed to dedicate to God the son for which she asked.

The book of Tobit records the offering at the same time of two prayers of lamentation. Because of reproaches of neighbors, blindness, and poverty, Tobit was grieved and wept and prayed.[2] The words of his prayer are given in 3:2-6. At the same time in Ecbatana Sara suffered reproach because her seven husbands had all been killed by an evil spirit. She was very sorrowful and prayed to God.[3] It is interesting to note that she prayed for mercy and not for the expulsion of the evil spirit.

We find two instances of the lamentation experience related to sickness. Soon after Sennacherib's invasion Hezekiah was taken very sick, "sick unto death."[4] In this experience his action is briefly described and a one-line prayer is recorded. The sickness of David's child, which had been predicted by Nathan in his denunciation of David's sin, caused distress and an experience of lamentation.[5] The

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1 1 Sam. 1:9. This is an anachronism. The temple was not built yet, and the holy place at Shiloh, where the prayer was offered, was only a sanctuary.
2 Tobit 2.
3 Tobit 3:7-15.
4 2 Kg. 20:1-7.
5 2 Sam. 12:1-23.

father fasted and lay all night on the earth, and we infer from 2 Sam. 12:16 that he prayed for the life of the child.

THE CONFESSIONS OF JEREMIAH If the assaults of enemies and the faithlessness of friends were common causes of lamentation, then the prophet Jeremiah knew the experience first hand. His experiences of distress, especially the unfriendliness and plots of his neighbors in Anathoth, are shown in a series of passages called the Confessions of Jeremiah.[1] Their close relationship to the Psalms is shown by Calkins, who says: "In certain ways these 'Confessions' of Jeremiah mark a turning point in the history of Old Testament religion. As we have seen, they mark 'the transition from prophet to psalmist.' Prophecy culminated in him, and the Psalter dates from his influence."[2]

In these Confessions we see more intimately than anywhere else the motives of lamentation working in a very sensitive religious nature. The prophet's distress was intensified by the nature of his faith and by the urgency of his mission, his feeling of the necessity of prophecy. He suffered because the people would not heed the message which he felt he must bring.

The hostility of the men of Anathoth is shown in 11:19, and their words are quoted in verse 21:

> Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Thou shalt not prophesy in the name of Jehovah, that thou die not by our hand. [3]

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1 Note Jer. 11:18-23, 12:1-6, 15:10-21, 17:12-18, 18:18-23, 20:7-18.
2 Calkins, J 22.
3 Jer. 11:21. Cf. 18:18-23.

In the opening verses of ch. 12 the contrast is still further drawn between Jeremiah and his enemies. They, the wicked, are prosperous and at ease, while Jeremiah, the servant of God, suffers.[1]

The prophet's anguish is intense because he feels forsaken by his God, who has permitted this distress and reproach and has deceived him.

> I sat not in the assembly of them that make merry, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand; for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? Wilt thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?[2]

The pain of prophecy is again the theme in 20:7ff. The immediate cause of this lamentation is Jeremiah's being put in the stocks and his altercation with Pashur (20:1-6), but back of this lies the whole experience of bringing an unwelcome message to people who refuse to hear it. Jeremiah laments that he must speak a message which brings him trouble and involves him in the plots of his enemies.

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1 "It must be recalled that Jeremiah is not complaining because of some personal injustice which befalls him, as it does all men, in the course of human experience. Had he remained quietly at Anathoth, and there experienced the normal sorrows and disappointments of life, such passages as these would not have been written at all. These protests are written rather out of the heart of a worker for righteousness. It is here that Jeremiah differentiates himself from other less religious men. These complain to God because of some private misfortune or misunderstanding which has overtaken them. At this point Jeremiah would not have complained at all. But Jeremiah protests that while he has been struggling for God and for His cause, God seems to have deserted His servant and allowed him to become the victim of his enemies." Calkins, J 202,203.

2 Jer. 15:17-18.

Chapter VIII

Actions of Lamentation.

PLACE A person in distress might go to the sanctuary, but it was not essential that he go there, and a prayer of lamentation might be uttered wherever the suppliant happened to be.

A few references indicate that psalms were to be offered in the temple. Psa. 5 was a "Morning Watch" prayer for the temple:

> For I entreat thee in the morning;
> Thou shalt hear my voice.
> In the morning I will set in order
> And seek thee out.
> .....
> But I in thy great mercy
> May come into thy house,
> Bow myself down before thy holy temple,
> In fear before thee. [1]

Psa. 28 was to be offered in the temple, and the prayer was directed "toward the innermost place of thy sanctuary."[2]

Other psalms were definitely not offered in the sanctuary but apart from it, expressing a longing for it. Psa. 42,43 was uttered in the distance; the psalmist asked when he might come before God again (42:2) and comforted himself with the recollection of his past visits to the temple (42:4). In other cases the psalmist called "from the end of the earth,"[3] and in "a dry and weary land"[4] far from the sanctuary.

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1 Psa. 5:3c,4,7. Reconstructed. Read 3c, 4a
אֶל־הֵיכַל קָדְשְׁךָ אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶה יְהוָה See Kittel, BH; Gunkel, P 17,19.

2 Psa. 28:2 RV mg. " דְּבִיר der Hinterraum im Tempel, das spätere 'Allerheiligste.'" Gunkel, P 121.

3 Psa. 61:2.

4 Psa. 63:1,2.

In the historical books we find the same variety of usage: some prayers of lamentation were offered in the temple and some wherever the suppliant was. Hannah offered her prayer in the sanctuary, partly because it was there at the feast that her distress was most bitter.[1] Hezekiah went into the temple on both occasions of lamentation over invasion,[2] but in his sickness he simply turned over in bed and prayed and wept with his face turned toward the wall.[3] When David entreated for the life of his son, he did not go to the temple, but spent the night in his own house.[4] Ezra, in distress over the sin of mixed marriages, was at first too overwhelmed to do more than sit on the ground in confusion, but later went and fell on his knees and stretched out his hands before God, presumably in the temple.[5]

In the prophetic books we find a number of calls to public lamentation, calling the people to lament in the sanctuary and in other places. The places mentioned are: high places,[6] bare heights,[7] house tops,[8] broad places,[9] and the temple.[10]

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1 Sam. 1:9,10.
2 2 Kg. 19:1,14.
3 2 Kg. 20:2,3.
4 2 Sam. 12:16.
5 Ezra 9:3,4.
6 Isa. 15:2.
7 Jer. 3:21, 7:29.
8 Isa. 15:2, Jer. 48:38.
9 Isa. 15:2, Amos 5:16.
10 Joel 2:17 "Between the porch and the altar."

ACTIONS PERFORMED Certain actions were characteristic of the lamentation experience and were performed to accompany and emphasize the prayer of lamentation. These actions are mentioned infrequently in the psalms, but in the historical and prophetic books we find many references to them.

We will look first for actions mentioned in the psalms. When the prayer was offered in the temple, the penitent bowed himself and lifted his hands in entreaty. We have already noted a reference to bowing.[1] The lifting of the hands is mentioned in several psalms:

> Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee.
> When I lift up my hands toward the innermost place of
> thy sanctuary. [2]

> Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;
> The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.[3]

In Psa. 25, a late psalm, this action is spiritualized:

> Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul.[4]

Actions of humiliation and self-mortification were carried on apart from the sanctuary. Chief among these were fasting and the wearing of sackcloth. Particularly bitter was it when the psalmist was taunted because of his lamentation, which was made evident because of his sackcloth and fasting:

> I afflicted my soul with fasting,
> and it turned to insults for me.
> I made sackcloth also my vesture,
> and became a proverb unto them.[5]

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1 Psa. 5:7. See above.
2 Psa. 28:2 mg. See above.
3 Psa. 141:2. Cf. Psa. 88:9, 143:6.
4 Psa. 25:1.
5 Psa. 69:10,11. Tr. from Cheyne, P 193.

In another case the psalmist complained because when his friends were sick he prayed for them with the appropriate accompaniment of sackcloth and fasting, but when he was in distress they taunted him.[1]

In the historical and prophetic books the actions of lamentation are much more fully described than in the Psalter. The following list of actions includes those described in the historical books and those criticized or recommended in the prophetic books. The list is uncritical in that it takes no account of the date or authenticity of the passages. In some cases the actions described are attacked by the prophets as heathen and unavailing with Yahweh, and in other cases they are recommended as proper expressions of humility and entreaty. I have included all as actions of lamentation, however, because I have assumed that the actions criticized were the actions popularly practiced and that the actions recommended were actions which might be practiced: in either case the actions were in some way associated with the experience of lamentation. For our immediate purpose it makes little difference who wrote the passages from which the description of action is taken, for the passage shows that at some time (the time described, or the historian's, or the prophet's time, or later) these actions were associated with the lamentation.

Weeping and wailing are frequently mentioned.[2] The priests,[3] and

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1 Psa. 35:11-16. Note also Psa. 30:11, 102:5, 109:24. Cf. Baruch 4:20.
2 Isa. 15:2; Jer. 4:8, 9:18, 49:3; Mic. 1:8.
3 Joel 2:17.

trained mourners[1] were called upon to weep. Hannah,[2] Hezekiah,[3] and Nehemiah[4] wept as they prayed. Self-mortification was practiced in different forms. Fasting was both a public act[5] and a private observance.[6] To mutilate the body the hair and the beard were cut,[7] and the hands were cut.[8] Mourning was indicated by the clothing. To strip and make bare was one sign,[9] or the clothes might be rent.[10] The wearing of sackcloth was another sign.[11] The Priests might wear sackcloth,[12] and according to one reference sackcloth was placed on the altar.[13]

By other actions the penitent people humbled themselves before God. They might bow the head,[14] or fall on the face,[15] or on the knees,[16] or lie prostrate.[17] They sat in sackcloth and ashes,[18] wallowed in ashes,[19] sat in filth,[20] or rolled in the dust.[21] Ashes might also be put on the head or body.[22]

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1 Jer. 9:17; Amos 5:16.
2 1 Sam. 1:10.
3 2 Kg. 20:3.
4 Neh. 1:4.
5 Joel 2:12, cf. 1:14, 2:15; Jonah 3:5,7; 2 Chron. 20:3; Esther 4:16; Judith 4:13; 1 Macc. 3:47.
6 2 Sam. 12:16; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 9:3.
7 Isa. 15:2; Jer. 7:29, 48:37; Mic. 1:16; Ezra 9:3.
8 Jer. 48:37.
9 Isa. 32:11; Mic. 1:8.
10 2 Kg. 19:1; Ezra 9:3; Esther 4:1; 1 Macc. 3:47. The act is implied by Joel 2:13.
11 Isa. 32:11; Jer. 4:8, 6:26, 48:37, 49:3; Jonah 3:5,8; Dan. 9:3; 2 Kg. 19:1; Esther 4:1; Judith 4:10; 1 Macc. 3:47.
12 Joel 1:13.
13 Judith 4:11.
14 Isa. 58:2.
15 Josh. 7:6; Judith 9:1.
16 Ezra 9:4.
17 2 Sam. 12:16.
18 Isa. 58:2.
19 Jer. 6:26; Jonah 3:6.
20 Jer. 48:18. RV "Come down from thy glory and sit in thirst." This expression is meaningless and occurs nowhere else. Sit in filth, or dust, would be more intelligible here. See Kittel, BH. Cf. Am. Tr. "... and sit in the mire."
21 Mic. 1:10.
22 Judith 4:11, 9:1; Add. Esther 14:12; 1 Macc. 3:47.

CONCLUSIONS We may draw a few conclusions on the nature of these actions. They are acts of entreaty and humiliation, designed to humiliate the suppliant and to entreat the favor of God, to whom they are directed. Raising or stretching out of the hands and bowing will be recognized as characteristic of the Babylonian Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand.[1] Weeping and wailing, prostrating the face, bowing and crawling, and fasting are all characteristic of the Babylonian Penitential Psalms.[2] The symbolical actions which accompanied the Magical Formulas[3] have no parallels here; none of these actions was directed against evil to drive it out by the power of magic. Significant also is the absence of the complicated ritual offerings which accompanied the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand.[4] It was not considered necessary to entreat the favor of Yahweh by incense or libations.

The fact that these actions are more closely parallel to those in the Penitential Psalms than to those in the other forms in Babylonian literature indicates a high level of development in the ideas underlying them. Religious development has gone beyond the primitive ideas of magic and the power of evil spirits, and the suppliant now tries only to win the favor of or appease his god by actions of entreaty or humiliation.

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1 See above pp 21-22.
2 See above pp 40-42.
3 See above pp 7ff.
4 See above pp 23ff.

It is significant also that in the experience as indicated by the passages studied the priest did not play the all-important part that he did in the lamentation experience of the Babylonian.[1] It appears that the priests led the people in the act of public lamentation,[2] but an individual might perform his acts and offer his prayer without a priest to direct and accompany him. The priest Eli had a part in Hannah's experience of lamentation, but only because he noticed her praying in the sanctuary; she did not go to him first.[3] Hezekiah sent for Isaiah when he was in trouble, but for the prophet's advice rather than for his priestly assistance.[4] We conclude that in the Old Testament the lamentation was an individual experience which might be carried on without the assistance of a priest.[5]

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1 See above pp 20,40.
2 Joel 2:17.
3 1 Sam. 1:9-18.
4 2 Kg. 19:1ff.
5 According to Gunkel, Psa. 121 is a liturgy of individual lamentation with parts for priest and penitent; but it is a single example, and no other liturgies of this type are found in the Psalter. Liturgies of national lamentation are more common. See Gunkel, EP 409, P 539. Peters finds part-singing in Psa. 6, but the evidence for his arrangement is insufficient. See Peters, PL 99.

CHAPTER IX

Prayers of Lamentation

EXAMPLES Examples of the prayers which were offered in the experience of lamentation are found extensively in the Psalter, and in a few instances in other books of the Old Testament, both canonical and apocryphal. The prayers in the Psalter are the Psalms of Individual Lamentation, one of the Gattungen which have been recognized and described by Gunkel.[1]

In the historical books we may recognize the following as prayers of individual lamentation; the prayer of Jacob before meeting Esau (Gen. 32:9-12); the prayer of Moses for the people (Ex. 32:11-13); Hezekiah's prayer in sickness (2 Kg. 20:3); Nehemiah's prayer on receiving bad news from Jerusalem (Neh. 1:5-11); the prayer of Tobit (Tobit 3:2-6) and of Sara (Tob. 3:5-11); the prayer of Judith in the siege of Bethulia (Judith 9:2-14); the Prayer of Manasseh.[2]

The Confessions of Jeremiah have already been noted as examples of spontaneous individual lamentation.[3] Daniel 9 contains a prayer of lamentation over the hardships of Jerusalem and the apparent delay of salvation.[4] Jonah 2 contains a psalm in the form of an individual

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1 See Gunkel, EP 172ff. A list of these psalms is given there.
2 Apocrypha. The context is 2 Chron. 33:10-13.
3 See above p.
4 Dan. 9:4-19. It is assumed that the Book of Daniel comes from about 165 B.C., and not the time of the exile. The prayer of lamentation, then, shows a form of prayer coming from the time of the Maccabees. We assume that the actions described and the words given were typical of the author's own time.

lamentation in retrospect, looking back on the prayer as offered and the salvation as already accomplished.[1] Habbakuk 3 is a psalm with many characteristics of the lamentation. In spirit it closely resembles Psa. 77, which has probably been adapted from it.[2]

STRUCTURE The structure of the prayer of lamentation is best studied in the Psalter because these texts are in the complete form as they were preserved in the collection of devotional literature, not in the brief, perhaps fragmentary, form as they were recorded or inserted in the historical accounts. The structure of the prayers is not rigid, and no example will be found of a prayer which follows exactly the outline given below; but this outline gives the essential elements of a prayer of individual lamentation. The elements are:

(1) Invocation.
(2) Lamentation.
(3) Petition.
(4) Grounds for Divine Intervention.
(5) Certainty of Hearing.
(6) Vow.

The outline may be illustrated in Psa. 54, which is brief and typical.

(1) Invocation

Save me, O God, by thy name,
And judge me in thy might.
Hear my prayer, O God;
Give ear to the words of my mouth.

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1 Jonah 2:2-9. The psalm is independent of the remainder of the book and complete in itself. It may be organic in this place, but it is more likely an independent psalm, inserted either by the author of the book or by another hand. Many passages are paralleled in the Psalter, and some are apparently copied. Since the book of Jonah is the latest in the Old Testament, it is quite possible that this psalm is an artificial composition, made up of snatches of earlier psalms.

2 See Smith, BTP II 128, Kirkpatrick, P 457.

(2) Lamentation

For strangers are risen up against me,
And violent men have sought after my soul:
They have not set God before them.

(3) Grounds for Divine Intervention

Behold, God is my helper:
The Lord is the great upholder of my soul.[1]

(4) Petition

Requite the evil unto mine enemies;[2]
Destroy thou them in thy truth

(5) Vow and Praise

With a freewill-offering will I sacrifice unto thee:
I will give thanks unto thy name, O Jehovah, for it is good.
For he hath delivered me out of all trouble,
And mine eye hath seen my desire upon mine enemies.

An individual lamentation may have two or more cycles: that is, the cycle of parts in the prayer may be repeated and the psalmist's climb from despair made more than once.[3] Psa. 31, which we may take as an example, begins with petition based on trust, rises to thanksgiving, slips back into another call from distress, and rises through lament and petition to a hymn of praise. The outline is as follows:

A First Cycle.
  1 Invocation, with petition based on trust (1-6).
  2 Certainty of hearing, with thanksgiving (7-8).
B Second Cycle
  1 Invocation (9a).
  2 Lamentation (9b-13).
  3 Petition (14-18).
  4 Hymn: praise in retrospect on the experience as past (19-24).

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1 Reconstructed. "The sense is not that God is the support of the psalmist among many others, but that he is so in a supreme degree - that he sums up in himself the qualities of a class, viz. the class of helpers." Cheyne, P 152.

2 Translating הָשִׁיב as jussive. See Gunkel, P 236.

3 See Gunkel, P 437. Examples of the two-cycle prayer are Psa. 31, 35, 86, 94. The climb "aus schmerzensreicher Tiefe in jubelende Höhe" is made three times in Psa. 42,43 and Psa. 71.

Psa. 71 is the utterance of an old man who faces both the insecurity of old age and the reproaches of enemies. The psalm goes through three cycles, climbing to praise and not slipping back each time to the level of the beginning. The dominant mood of the first cycle is that of trust, taking refuge in the God who has been the psalmist's help before. The invocation begins with trust (1,2). A passage of petition follows (3,4). Trust is based on past experiences (5-7). The cycle ends with a vow of praise (8). The mood of the second cycle is lamentation over enemies. A call for help in old age (9) is followed by a passage of lamentation describing the enemies and quoting their words (10-11). Petition is directed against them (12-13), and the cycle closes with an expression of hope and a vow (14-16). The psalmists mood does not sink back to discouragement, but begins the third cycle where the second closed - with the thought of trust and praise (17-18). High trust is expressed in the righteousness and might of God (19-20), and after one verse of petition (21) the entire psalm closes with a vow and an expression of praise (22-24).

ANALYSIS: INVOCATION The psalmist began his prayer of lamentation by calling upon his God. The call might be reduced to one or two words, as the psalmist broke out immediately in petition or description of distress.

Jehovah, how are mine adversaries increased![1]

O Jehovah, rebuke me not in thine anger.[2]

O Jehovah, my God, in thee do I take refuge.[3]

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me;
For my soul taketh refuge in thee.[4]

The call might be extended to the length of the entire first line, or of several lines. The more extended call mentioned some of the characteristics of God which encouraged the psalmist to turn to him, or it told more about the psalmist and his need or the way in which was praying.

Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul.[5]

O God, thou art my God, earnestly will I seek thee.[6]

God was the psalmist's "rock," and with no concern for mixed metaphors he called on him not to be deaf and silent.[7]

Appeal could be made to the God of salvation:

O Jehovah, the God of my salvation,
I have cried day and night before thee.
Let my prayer enter into thy presence;
Incline thine ear unto my cry.[8]

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1 Psa. 3:1.
2 " 6:1.
3 " 7:1.
4 " 57:1. Cf. 56:1.
5 " 25:1.
6 " 63:1.
7 " 27:1-2.
8 " 88:1-2.

In other instances the psalmist appealed to the faithfulness[1] or the mercy[2] of God. The call became more plaintive when the suppliant emphasized his own condition.

> Give ear to my prayer, O God;
> And hide not thyself from my supplication.
> Attend unto me and answer me:
> I am restless in my complaint, and I moan.[3]

In the historical books we find examples of the invocation lengthened by praise in attributes of honor, recollection of promises, and historical references to the mighty deeds of Yahweh. Jacob began his prayer with recollection of the past, referring to Abraham and Isaac and to his own experience.

> O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac,
> O Jehovah, who saidst to me, Return unto thy country,
> and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good. [4]

Hezekiah's prayer opens with praise and petition:

> O Jehovah, the God of Israel, that sittest above the
> cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the
> kingdoms of the earth. Incline thine ear, O Jehovah,
> and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see. [5]

The invocation of Nehemiah's prayer refers to the majesty, the terror, and the lovingkindness of God.[6]

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1 Psa. 143:1-2.
2 " 51:1-2.
3 " 55:1-2. Cf. 42:1-2, 130:1-2, 142:1-3b.
4 Gen. 32:9.
5 2 Kg. 19:15-16. Cf. these invocations from national lamentations:
O Jehovah, thou God to whom vengeance belongeth,
Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth.
Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth. (Psa. 94:1)

Give ear, O Shepherd of Isareal,
Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock:
Thou that sittest above the cherubim, shine forth. (Psa. 80:1)
6 Neh. 1:5-6.

In the prayers included in the aprocryphal books we find the invocations still more formal and more lengthened with lofty praise. A prayer attributed to Mordecai begins with phrases that approach flattery:

> O Lord, Lord, the King Almighty: for the whole world is in thy power, and if thou hast appointed to save Israel, there is no man that can gainsay thee: for thou hast made heaven and earth, and all the wondrous things under the heaven. Thou art Lord of all things, and there is no man that can resist thee, which art the Lord. [1]

The Prayer of Manasseh is addressed to the God of the fathers, the creator, who is merciful and long-suffering:

> O Lord, Almighty God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed: who hast made heaven and earth, with all the ornament thereof; who hast bound the sea by the word of thy commandment; who hast shut up the deep, and sealed it by thy terrible and glorious name; whom all men fear and tremble before thy power; for the majesty of thy glory cannot be borne, and thine angry threatening toward sinners is importable: but thy merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; for thou art the most high Lord, of great compassion, longsuffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men. [2]

The reason for the lengthened invocation in the later prayers may perhaps be found in the increased sense of the majesty of Yahweh. The religion of the Psalms is an intimate, personal religion, and the psalmists base their petitions on their personal trust in Yahweh. In post-exilic Judaism, as reflected by the later historical books, Yahweh became a "high God," majestic and mighty, who could be approached only through high-sounding words of praise.[3]

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1 Add. Esther 13:9-11. This is a personal prayer over public misfortune. It illustrates the tendency to heighten the terms of honor in the invocation. Cf. Judith 9:2-6.

2 Prayer of Manasseh. The verses in this short book are not numbered.

3 Note Begrich's comment on the relation of a Babylonian penitent to the high gods. ZAW XLVI 244.

LAMENTATION In the lamentation section the penitent psalmist cried to God in bitter questions about his distress or described his condition in words designed to arouse the sympathy of God. The questions ask Why? and How long?[1]

Why hast thou forgotten me?[2]
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

Why castest thou off my soul?[3]
Why hidest thou thy face from me?

The four-fold "How long?" in Psa. 13 takes the place of the invocation, but it is properly a lament since the questions present the distressful condition of the psalmist.

How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou forget me for ever?
How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
Having sorrow in my heart all the day?[4]
How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

To arouse sympathy for himself the psalmist described his unhappy state:

I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint:
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd;
And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;[5]
And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

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1 Peters suggests that How long was a technical term. "How long was in Hebrew as in Babylonian psalmody a liturgical phrase to be used in petitions from distress, and also the name applied to Psalms containing such petitions (cf. 74:9). In liturgical use such how long's may constitute a sort of mass for the recovery of the sick (see also 6:3)." Peters, PL 117. Cf. this phrase from a Babylonian lamentation of the people: "The psalmist speaks no more the 'how long thy heart.'" IV R 11 Obv. 31. See Langdon, SBP 239.

2 Psa. 42:9.
3 " 88:14.
4 " 13:1-2. Cf. Psa. 22:1, 35:17, 42:2. Ex 32:11-12, Josh. 7:7-8.
5 " 22:14-15. Cf. Psa. 6:6-7, 38:2-10.

Conversely, to arouse indignation against his enemies, the psalmist might describe their wickedness and the way they persecuted him.

> All day they torture me with words:
> all their thoughts are against me for evil.
> They attack, they set an ambush;
> they, even they, mark my footsteps, [1]
> even as they have waited for my soul.

In one psalm the enemy is described in words of direct address, which accuse him of his wickedness.[2] In the description of his wickedness the enemy's words may be quoted:

> They say, "Who shall see us,
> and search out our secrets?
> The deception has succeeded,
> the bosom is unsearchable,
> and the heart is deep." [3]

In a few instances the psalmist acknowledged or confessed his sin. Psa. 51 is one of the most deeply spiritual in the Psalter. The penitent's distress is only intimated in one line of the petition:

That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. (8b) Where we would expect a lamentation section, describing the distress, we find this confession of sin:

> For I know my transgressions;
> And my sin is ever before me.
> Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
> And done that which is evil in thy sight;
> That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest,
> And be clear when thou judgest.

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1 Psa. 56:5-6, Cheyne, P 157. Cf. Psa. 22:16-18, 54:3, 57:4-6.
2 Psa. 52:1-4.
3 " 64:5-6, following Gunkel, P 269. Cf. Psa. 70:3. Note that Hezekiah "spread before Yahweh" the boasting words of his enemies (2 Kg. 19: 14-16).
4 Psa. 51:3-6.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; [4]
And in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.

In Psa. 69 the reproaches of enemies are described as mire into which the psalmist sinks (2-4, 14-15), but the psalmist recognizes his own sin as the cause of his suffering reproach.[5]

PETITION The purpose of the petition is to influence Yahweh to remedy the distress described in the lamentation. Since distress indicated to the pious Hebrew that Yahweh was unfavorable to him, the petition might be offered for a favorable attitude.

Hide not thy face from me;
Put not thy servant away in anger:
Thou hast been my help; [6]
Cast me not off, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

The prayer for guidance may be considered as a petition for favor.

Lead me, O Jehovah, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; [7]
Make thy way straight before my face.

The prayer for purification and cleansing in Psa. 51 was uttered that the one purified might find favor in the sight of Yahwah.[8]

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5 Cf. Psa. 38:4-5, 39:11, 130:3-4. Note the passage of confession in the Prayer of Manasseh, beginning, "For I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea ..."

6 Psa. 27:9. Cf. Psa. 25:16-22, 31:16, 38:21-22, 86:3-4, Ex. 32:12.

7 Psa. 5:8. Cf. 27:11, 86:11.

8 Psa. 51:7-12.

Since the psalmist suffered distress on account of his enemies, he offered petition for deliverance, both from their evil devices and from their evil influence.

> Keep me as the apple of the eye;
> Hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
> From the wicked that oppress me, [1]
> My deadly enemies that compass me about.

The author of Psa. 26 asked that he be delivered from the contamination of wicked men; he did not want to be counted among them:

> Gather not my soul with sinners,
> Nor my life with men of blood;
> In whose hands is wickedness,
> And their right hand is full of bribes.
> But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity:
> Redeem me, and be merciful unto me. [2]

Because the psalmist believed that his enemies were the enemies of God,[3] he could with perfect sincerity pray that they be punished, even with bitter and violent punishments. Note these words:

> Give them according to their work, and according to the wickedness of their doings:
> Give them after the operation of their hands;
> Render to them their desert.
> Because they regard not the works of Jehovah,
> Nor the operation of his hands, [4]
> He will break them down and not build them up.

The intimate connection between petitions for self and against enemies is shown by these words:

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1 Psa. 17:8-9. Cf. Psa. 22:19-21, 31:1-4, 69:13-18, 71:3-4, Gen. 32:11, 2 Kg. 19:19.
2 Psa. 26:9-11. Cf. Psa. 28:3.
3 Note Psa. 54:3.
4 Psa. 28:4-5. Cf. Psa. 5:10-11, 17:13, 70:2-3, 71:11, Add. Esther 14:11.

> Quicken me, O Jehovah, for thy name's sake;
> In thy righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.
> And in thy lovingkindness cut off mine enemies,
> And destroy all them that afflict my soul;
> For I am thy servant. [1]

In the two lamentation prayers in the book of Tobit petition is offered for death, but nowhere else is such petition found. Tobit prayed for favor, deliverance, and death.[2] Sara prayed for deliverance in death:

> Take me out of the earth, that I may hear no more the reproach.[3]

She recognized that God might not will her death, and asked for deliverance in this life if death were not granted:

> But if it please thee not that I should die, command some regard to be had of me, and pity taken of me, that I hear no more reproach. [4]

GROUNDS FOR DIVINE INTERVENTION The suppliant in his prayer of lamentation might express the reasons why Yahweh should intervene on his behalf. In this section of the prayer we may discern two motives: (1) To lay a basis for the petition offered to the deity. Reasons were presented why Yahweh should act to save the petitioner. (2) To comfort the petitioner himself by recalling in words of trust the righteous and merciful nature of the deity, who would answer the prayer and grant the desired deliverance.

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1 Psa. 143:11-12.
2 Tobit 3:6
3 Tobit 3:13.
4 " 3:15.

The suppliant might base his appeal on Yahweh's care for his reputation, especially among his enemies:[1]

> Show me a token for good,
> That they who hate me may see it and be put to shame, [2]
> Because thou, Jehovah, hast helped me and comforted me.

Other grounds were given when the psalmist mentioned what would happen to him if Yahweh did not intervene:

> Lighten mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death;
> Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him;
> Lest mine adversaries rejoice when I am moved. [3]

Trust in God was a frequent ground for divine intervention in the prayers of individual lamentation. The place where the expression of trust most frequently occurs is before the petition, the order being: invocation, lamentation, trust, petition.[4] In Psa. 5 a section expressing trust in the righteousness and mercy of God forms a link between the invocation and the petition:

> For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness;
> Evil shall not sojourn with thee.
> The arrogant shall not stand in thy sight:
> Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.
> Thou wilt destroy them that speak lies:
> Jehovah abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

In Psa. 86, a two-cycle lamentation, an expression of trust forms the second section of each cycle.[6]

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1 In the national lamentations regard for Yahweh's name, his reputation among the nations, is a very common basis for petition. Note Psa. 74:18, 79:9-10, 83:18.

2 Psa. 86:17. Cf. Psa. 109:26-27.

3 Psa. 13:3b-4. Cf. Psa. 6:4-5, 88:10-12, 143:7.

4 Note Psa. 54:4, p. 90 above.

5 Psa. 5:4-7. Note the expression of trust in Psa. 39:7, 12cd as rearranged by Gunkel, P 163.

6 See Psa. 86:8-10 and 15. Cf. Psa. 42:5 and 11 and 43:5.

CERTAINTY OF HEARING Many of the lamentation psalms close with a passage expressing certainty of hearing. The mood is similar to that of trust, expressed earlier in the prayer, but here the purpose is different. The expression of trust is one of the grounds for divine intervention. It forms a basis for petition, while certainty of hearing follows the petition. There is no more looking backward and striving to establish confidence on past experience, but the look is forward with triumph. The psalmist shifts abruptly from lament or petition to certainty and from second person address to God to third person statement about God. Note the abrupt change from lament to certainty in Psa. 6. The lament closes with verse 7, and the psalmist then expresses his certainty, first addressing his enemies and then speaking of them in the third person.

> Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;
> For Jehovah hath heard the voice of my weeping.
> Jehovah hath heard my supplication;
> Jehovah will receive my prayer.
> All mine enemies shall be put to shame and sore troubled:
> They shall turn back, they shall be put to shame suddenly.[1]

An abrupt change from petition to certainty is found in Psa. 140. Petition is directed against the wicked in verses 9-11, concluding with this verse:

> May the slanderer have no standing in the land.
> May disaster pursue the violent man with blow upon blow.[2]

The expression of certainty which follows immediately is calm and restrained in contrast to the vigor of the petition:

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1 Psa. 6:8-10.
2 " 140:11, Am. Tr. Cf. Gunkel, P 593.

I know that the Lord will maintain
The cause of the wretched, the rights of the poor.
Certainly, the righteous shall give thanks to thy name;
The upright shall dwell in thy presence. [1]

Where the psalmist directs his petition against his enemies as well as for himself, the concluding section of certainty may express confidence in both the deliverance of the psalmist (and the righteous) and the destruction of the wicked. Note the conclusion to the individual part of Psa. 94:

But Jehovah hath been my high tower,
And my God the rock of my refuge.
And he hath brought upon them their own iniquity,
And will cut them off in their own wickedness;
Jehovah our God will cut them off. [2]

Another usage is to lengthen out the expression of certainty into a hymn of praise to the God who hears and answers:

Blessed be Jehovah,
Because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
Jehovah is my strength and my shield;
My heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped:
Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;
And with my song will I praise him.
Jehovah is their strength,
And he is the stronghold of salvation to his anointed.
Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance:
Be their shepherd also, and bear them up for ever. [3]

The two cycles of Psa. 31 close with expressions of certainty: a rejoicing over deliverance (7-8), and a hymn of praise which looks back on the

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1 Psa. 140:12-13, Am. Tr.

2 Psa. 94:22-23. The psalm consists of three parts, distinct and yet related to each other: 1-7 National Lamentation, 8-15 Wisdom Psalm, 16-23 Individual Lamentation. See Gunkel, P 413.

3 Psa. 28: 6-9. Note also Psa. 57:6ff where certainty of destruction of the psalmist's enemy is followed by a hymn of praise.

deliverance as already accomplished (19-24).[1]

VOW The prayer of individual lamentation frequently closed with a vow, in which the suppliant made some promise to his deity. The most frequent form is a simple promise to give thanks and sing praise. These vows are typical:

> I will give thanks unto Jehovah according to his righteousness,
> And will sing praise to the name of Jehovah most high. [2]

> I will sing unto Jehovah,
> Because he hath dealt bountifully with me. [3]

The vow to sing praise on the harp before the altar of God concludes (before the refrain) the third cycle of Psa. 42,43. Since this lamentation expresses the longing from afar for the sanctuary, it is appropriate that the vow should be directed toward the altar:

> Then will I go unto the altar of God,
> Unto God my exceeding joy;
> And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God. [4]

Each of the three cycles of Psa. 71 concludes with a vow to praise God and tell of his mighty acts and honor.[5] The intensity of the praise increases with each cycle, until the concluding shout of joy becomes a hymn.

In addition to praise and thanksgiving, some material offering might be promised in the vow. Material offerings are mentioned twice:

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1 Cf. Psa. 120, where two cycles conclude with hymns which express trust in Jehovah and praise for his deliverance (verses 12-22 and 25-28).
2 Psa. 7:17.
3 Psa. 13:6. Cf. Psa. 35:38, 52:9, 61:8, 109:30-31, 144:9.
4 " 43:4
5 " 71:8, 14-16, and 22-24.

With a freewill-offering will I sacrifice unto thee:
I will give thanks unto thy name, O Jehovah, for it is good. [1]

Thy vows are upon me, O God:
I will render thank-offerings unto thee. [2]

A later addition to Psa. 51 makes the vow to bring animal sacrifices.[3] The prayer itself concludes with verses 16-17 which definitely deny the efficacy or value of sacrifices, and vows a broken and a contrite heart instead. Some later editor, who had the spirit of a priest rather than of a prophet, added verses 18-19 to offset the offense against the idea of sacrifice.[4]

The attitude of the lamentation psalms toward sacrifice is further shown by Psa. 69:30-31, where a song is given preference over sacrifice:

I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify him with thanksgiving.
And it will please Jehovah better than an ox,
Or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs. [5]

This vow to sing praise is immediately followed by the hymn of praise and thanksgiving (verses 32-34).[6]

In her prayer at the sanctuary at Shiloh Hannah promised that if Yahweh would give the son for which she asked he would be dedicated to

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1 Psa. 54:6.
2 " 56:12.
3 " 51:18-19.
4 Cf. Gunkel, P 226.
5 Psa. 69:30-31.
6 Verses 35-36 are disputed. Gunkel (P 295) links them with 34 as part of the song of praise. Better is the suggestion of Leslie (ABC 553) that these verses are a liturgical adaptation.

Yahweh all the days of his life.[1] The faithful performance of this vow[2] was followed by a song of praise.[3]

The payment of an individual vow is described in Psa. 66:13-22.[4] The vow was made in distress (14), and we assume that its conditions have been fulfilled. Now the vow is paid in the temple (13). Sacrifice is offered (15), and the congregation in the temple is called near to hear the man praise and tell what God has done for him (16-17).

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1 1Sam. 1:11. Cf. these other vows: Gen. 28:20-22, Jud. 11:30-31.
2 1 Sam. 1:24-28.
3 " 2:1-10.
4 This psalm is not a lamentation. It contains two parts: A National Song of Thanksgiving (1-12) and the account of the payment of an individual vow (13-20).

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter X

Comparison

STRUCTURE When we review the material which we have studied, we are struck by the similarity of the texts in the two literatures. The Babylonian and the Hebrew lamentation texts are built on the same structure and include the same essential elements of invocation, lamentation, and petition. The comparison may be shown by a review of the structures studied.

Babylonian Prayer of the Lifting of the Hand[1]

(1) Invocation.
(2) Self-introduction.
(3) Lamentation.
(4) Petition.
(5) Vow.

Babylonian Penitential Psalm[2]

(1) Invocation.
(2) Lamentation.
(3) Confession.
(4) Petition.

Old Testament Lamentation Psalm[3]

(1) Invocation.
(2) Lamentation.
(3) Petition.
(4) Grounds for Divine Intervention.
(5) Certainty of Hearing.
(6) Vow.

It will be seen that these forms are basically the same. The significance

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1 See above pp. 27ff.
2 " " " 44ff.
3 " " " 93ff.

of the two new elements in the Old Testament lamentations (4 and 5) will be discussed below.

In form the Old Testament lamentations show more similarity to the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand than to the Penitential Psalms. Both begin with an invocation which calls upon the deity by name,[4] and both conclude with a vow to give thanks and praise.[5] The set phrases and liturgical refrains of lament and petition in the Penitential Psalms[6] find some parallels in the Psalter,[7] but not in the psalms of individual lamentation.[8] The words of lament and petition in the Old Testament lamentations resemble those in the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand in their simplicity and straightforwardness.[9]

ACTIONS The actions which accompanied the offering of these prayers of lamentation afford us a second means of comparing the experience in the Babylonian texts with that in the Hebrew texts. The symbolical actions of magic, performed to the accompaniment of magical formulas, played a very large part in the Babylonian cultus;[10] but symbolical actions play no appreciable part in the lamentation experience as we have discovered it in the Old Testament. Such traces of symbolical actions as remain only indicate an ancient practice now given up and no longer

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4 See above pp. 28 and 93.
5 " " pp. 36 and 104.
6 " " pp. 46, 50.
7 Note Psa. 107, 136.
8 See above pp. 96-100.
9 " " pp. 32-36.
10 " " pp. 7ff.

countenanced in the official religion.[11]

The actions which accompanied the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand were forms of entreaty to secure the favor of god or goddess. These included bowing, lifting the hands, holding to the image of the deity, and offering incense, libations, or plants before the deity.[12] Penitence in the Babylonian Penitential Psalms was expressed in actions of humiliation such as bowing prostrate, weeping, and fasting.[13] The few references in the lamentation psalms indicate actions of entreaty such as bowing and lifting the hands, and humiliation expressed through fasting and the wearing of sackcloth.[14] References in the historical and prophetic books indicate actions of lamentation through forms such as weeping, mutiliation of the body and clothes, and ashes or dust added to sackcloth.[15]

These actions would indicate that in the Old Testament experience of lamentation the mood was chiefly that of penitence. By his actions the psalmist, or the one offering the prayer, humiliated himself before his god. The similarity is greater toward the Penitential Psalms than toward the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand;[16] and if our picture of the development of ideas in the Babylonian texts is correct, the actions in the Old Testament texts belong to the highest stratum in the lamenta-

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11 See above p. 72
12 " " pp. 20ff.
13 " " pp. 40ff.
14 " " pp. 84ff.
15 " " p. 85ff.
16 " " p. 87.

tion literature, farthest removed from primitive ideas.

THE CAUSE OF DISTRESS From the prayers offered and the actions performed we can make deductions about the ideas underlying the experience of lamentation. It is significant to note the cause to which is attributed the distress suffered. Babylonian religion was polytheistic and dualistic: that is, there were many gods who were believed to be good, and opposed to them were the evil spirits or demons. At the lowest level that we have studied, the Babylonians attributed their distress directly to the evil spirits,[17] and sought to relieve it by actions and formulas against them. The next stage of development finds prayers and actions of entreaty to the gods for their help in overcoming the evil spirits.[18] The highest stage was reached when a Babylonian penitent ascribed his distress entirely to some deity whom he believed to be enraged against him. The anger was attributed to some offense committed; so the penitent tried to discover his offense, secure forgiveness, and appease the anger.[19]

The religion of the Old Testament lamentations was monotheistic and monistic: that is, prayers were offered to Yahweh alone, and all evil suffered was attributed ultimately to him. A few references point to a belief in evil spirits or demons opposed to Yahweh. We found reference to "the night terror," Deber, and Qeteb in Psa. 91,[20] but by the time this text was edited for the Psalter the belief in these two powers of

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17 See above pp. 4ff.
18 " " pp. 17ff.
19 " " pp. 39ff.
20 " " p. 68.

evil was a thing of the past.[21] Other references in the historical books mention evil spirits as agents of Yahweh, subordinate to his power and obedient to his will.[22] One other reference to evil spirits must be mentioned. The distress suffered by Sara was caused by "Asmodeus the evil spirit," who had killed her seven husbands.[23] Her prayer did not mention the cause of her distress, and asked only for death or freedom from reproach, but in answer the angel Raphael was sent "to bind Asmodeus the evil spirit."[24] By the smoke of a fish's liver the evil spirit was driven out, and although he fled to Egypt, the angel captured and bound him.[25] This story from a very late book shows Jewish belief at a period later than that which produced the Psalter, and the ideas expressed here are not in harmony with those expressed in the psalms of individual lamentation.[26]

In the psalms of individual lamentation the distress suffered is attributed to the anger of Yahweh. Note these words from the most bitter of the psalms:

> Thy wrath lieth hard upon me,
> And thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.
>
> Thy fierce wrath is gone over me;
> Thy terrors have cut me off.[27]

The same meaning is implied when the psalmist cries out that Yahweh has

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21 On demonology in the Old Testament see Oesterley and Robinson, HR Ch. VI.

22 See Jud. 9:23, 1 Sam. 16:14ff., 1 Kg. 22:21-23,

23 Tobit 3:7-15.

24 " 3:17

25 " 8:2-3.

26 On the demonology of later Judaism see article, "Demon, Devil," by Owen C. Whitehouse in HBD.

27 Psa. 88: 7,16. It is possible that the ending of this psalm is

hidden himself or turned his face away.

> Hide not thy face from me;
> Put not thy servant away in anger;
> Thou hast been my help. 28
> Cast me not off, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

The psalmist confesses his sin as the cause of the anger of Yahweh. Note these words which follow a lament over "wrath," "hot displeasure," and "indignation:"

> For mine iniquities are gone over my head:
> As a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
> My wounds are loathsome and corrupt,
> Because of my foolishness. 29

Distress attributed to the anger of a deity and sin acknowledged as the cause of that anger will be recognized as characteristic features of the Babylonian Penitential Psalms,[30] but significant contrasts will be noted in the Old Testament lamentations. The Babylonian penitent was often uncertain what deity was angry with him, but the Hebrew turned to Yahweh as the sole god and the only one to whom he need appeal. The Hebrew confessed his sin to Yahweh alone and did not dwell upon it; but the Babylonian, who was not sure of the nature of his offense, emphasized his sins in a long confession in the hope that he would name the right god and the right sin. According to the Babylonian idea, the anger of the deity might be only a burst of temper, to be calmed by soothing words; but in the Hebrew conception of God, the divine anger was the result of

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broken off. On anger cf. Psa. 6:1, 30:1-3, 102:10.

28 Psa. 27:9. Cf. Psa. 13:1, 22:1, 30:7b, 143:7.

29 Psa. 38:4-5. Cf. Psa. 39:11, 143:2, and The Prayer of Manasseh.

30 See above p. 48.

a rational judgment, a just condemnation of sin.[31]

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE DEITY In the attitude which the penitent took toward his deity we find further contrast between the Babylonian and the Hebrew experience.[32] The Babylonian penitent could approach his god only through the priest, who acted as mediator, but in the experience of the Hebrew the priest did not play this all-important part. We must assume that the priests were responsible for preserving the texts,[33] but apparently the presence of a priest as mediator was not essential in offering a prayer of lamentation. The divine mediators entreated by the Babylonian penitent have no place in the experience of the Hebrew. He could make his appeal to Yahweh alone without the need of anyone to mediate or intercede for him. His religion was a close, personal relationship to Yahweh.

Another contrast is noted in the way the penitent approached his deity. The Babylonian approached with flattery and based his appeal on the good humor created by words of high-sounding praise, while the Hebrew's confident approach with a simple call for help[34] was based on his intimate, personal trust in Yahweh. Begrich notes that the expressions of trust in

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31 Note Ex. 32:10ff., Ezra 9:10-15. Cf. Knudson, RT 144.

32 See above p. 88.

33 On the early collections in the formation of the Psalter see Leslie, ABC 510; Oesterley, FAP 58ff.; Peters, PL 55ff. Peters suggests that collections were made at the sanctuaries: Jerusalem, Dan, and Bethel. We may note that the most of the psalms of individual lamentation are included in the Davidic collections, and that the psalms "of Asaph" contain many national lamentations.

34 The invocations in the later Hebrew prayers are lengthened. Note above p. 94.

lamentation texts in the two literatures are similar in form and content, but that in spirit they are different from each other: all the expressions in the Israelite psalms are filled with personal relationship to Yahweh.[35]

This trust in Yahweh is expressed in the two new elements in the Hebrew lamentations: Grounds for Divine Intervention and Certainty of Hearing. These elements are lacking in the Babylonian texts because the Babylonians lacked the sense of personal relationship on which they are based. The nearest approach to the Grounds for Divine Intervention in the Babylonian texts is seen in a passage where Ashurnasirpal, praying to Ishtar, reminds her of what she has done for him in the past and what he has done for her.[36] This falls short of personal trust, and in none of the Babylonian texts do we find any confidence in the mercy of the god or any certainty that a favorable answer will be given. The mood of a Hebrew psalm of lamentation rises from lament to certainty, but no such progress is made in the Babylonian psalms. The Babylonian penitent could not reach the note of confidence and praise so often sounded by the Hebrew at the conclusion of his prayer.

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35 See Begrich ZAW XLVI 259-260.
36 XVII 22-40.

Chapter XI

Summary and Conclusions

In the Babylonian literature we have found different types of text which indicate different stages of development in the lamentation experience. The most primitive ideas are expressed in the magical formulas, which attempt to overcome evil by manipulation and incantation. The next stage of development is seen in the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand, which entreat the gods for help in overcoming the powers of evil. The highest stage is reached in the Penitential Psalms, which attempt to appease the gods and secure relief from distress by reestablishing a right relationship with them. This arrangement is logical rather than chronological; for as the development of ideas proceeded, the primitive ideas were not rejected, the old practices were kept up, and the texts used in them preserved.

In the development of Hebrew religion primitive ideas were discarded, the old practices were given up or made over, and the old texts were rejected or edited so thoroughly that only traces of the primitive ideas remain. Hence in the Hebrew literature we find no magical texts and only faint traces of the formulas and practices of magic. As compared with the two types distinguished in Babylonian literature, the Old Testament lamentations show in form similarity to the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand, but in content and underlying ideas more similarity to the Penitential Psalms. The Old Testament texts surpass all the Babylonian texts

in clarity and purity of thought and in their conception of the deity and of the penitent's relationship to him. Where the Babylonian penitent stood in fear of his god and approached with words of flattery, the Hebrew penitent turned to Yahweh with confidence and trust. Where the Babylonian penitent ended his prayer as uncertain and as troubled as he began, the Hebrew usually won his way through to certainty that his prayer would be answered and his distress relieved.

The similarities which we have observed point to the common reactions of two Semitic peoples to similar situations of distress. We find no evidence for direct influence or for borrowing from one literature to another. The Babylonian literature is older than the Hebrew, and it is possible that the Hebrews borrowed their forms of lamentation from their neighbors, but no evidence supports this assumption. The Babylonians and the Hebrews belonged to the same racial stock, and in some prehistoric period their language and their religion derived from common origins. In its most primitive form the lamentation experience was common to both of them, and similarity was preserved in the more developed forms as individuals were faced with the common problems of sickness and suffering. The Hebrews, with their genius for religion, advanced far beyond the Babylonians and made of the lamentation the spiritual experience that we find in the Old Testament Psalms.

SUMMARY In the Babylonian literature we have found different types of text which indicate different stages of development in the lamentation experience. The most primitive ideas are expressed in the magical formulas, which attempt to overcome evil by manipulation and incantation. The next stage of development is seen in the Prayers of the Lifting of the Hand, which entreat the gods for help in overcoming the powers of evil. The highest stage is reached in the Penitential Psalms, which attempt to appease the gods and secure relief from distress by reestablishing a right relationship with them. This arrangement is logical rather than chronological; for as the development of ideas proceeded, the primitive ideas were not rejected, the old practices were kept up, and the texts used in them preserved.

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stood in fear of his god and approached with words of flattery, the Hebrew penitent turned to Yahweh with confidence and trust. Where the Babylonian penitent ended his prayer as uncertain and as troubled as he began, the Hebrew usually won his way through to certainty that his prayer would be answered and his distress relieved.

Chapter XI

Relationship

INHERITANCE The similarities which we have discovered in structure and forms of expression indicate some relationship between the Babylonian and the Hebrew psalm literature. The Babylonian literature is older than the Hebrew, and the indications are that the literary forms of Old Testament psalms are an inheritance from the Babylonian. Psalm literature was not the only form inherited. The matter of Hebrew inheritance from the Babylonian is still an open question, but the study of the evident similarities and striking contrasts between them indicate that the origins of Hebrew literature are to be sought in Mesopotamia in the early Babylonian literature.[1]

The account in Genesis of the creation of the world and the origins of the human race shows similarity to the corresponding traditions in Babylonian literature.[2] Concerning the stories in Genesis, Robinson says: "It is true that they have acquired unique features, and when we compare the Biblical narratives with those of the East, we are struck by the difference as much as by the resemblances. This goes to prove that while a common origin is certain, there must have been a long period during which

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1 "Das alte Testament wurzelt in Form und Inhalt in babylonischer Wissenschaft." Winckler, GI I 122.

2 See King, ST; Barton, AB 287ff. Barton gives a list of sources for the comparison.

the two types of tradition remained unaffected by one another. In other words, the form in which these stories appear in Hebrew literature must have had a long history in Palestine after being brought thither from Mesopotamia, and we must throw their importation well back into the pre-Israelite age."[3]

Some relationship is also discoverable in the legal literature. The best known of Babylonian laws is the Code of Hammurapi,[4] and we have codes or parts of codes from the Hittites and the Assyrians.[5] Here the evidence indicates common inheritance from an early source. Robinson's conclusion is this: "The Old Testament form of law is, like its primitive tradition, derived from the common source through the medium of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine."[6]

The time and manner in which this inheritance came into Palestine cannot be stated definitely, but it was early and probably during a period of political domination. Arguing from both internal and external grounds, Robinson maintains that the influence came about the middle of the third millenium B.C., when the dynasty of Akkad, founded by Sargon I, exercised sovereignty over Syria and Palestine.[7]

Winckler has pointed out that Palestine did not develop a culture of its own but was under the influence of the two great civilizations of Egypt

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3 Oesterley and Robinson, HI I 34.
4 See Barton, AB 377ff. and article "Code of Hammurabi" by C. H. W. Johns in HBD ext. vol. 584ff.
5 See Barton, AB 406ff. and 427ff.
6 Oesterley and Robinson, HI I 34.

and Babylonia. When the Israelite tribes entered, Palestine was under the political domination of Egypt, but its culture was dominated by Babylonia, as it had been for a long time.[8] This cultural domination is shown by the Tell-el-Amarna letters, which, although addressed to an Egyptian king by his vassals in Palestine, were written in the Babylonian language. The use of the Babylonian language was widespread during the Tell-el-Amarna period and earlier,[9] and with the use of the language went literature and learning. The scribes whose business it was to write letters learned the language through its literature, just as college students today learn French or German through passages of French or German literature. Cook mentions the discovery of "text books" for these students: "Among the tablets discovered at el-Amarna were portions of Babylonian myths, written in as simple a form as possible, and furnished with dots to facilitate reading. These were evidently for the purpose of training the Egyptian scribe in the complex script. ... Examples of simple exercises were also found."[10]

The Babylonian literature which these Palestinian scribes learned was religious literature, and the scholars from whom they learned it were the priests, who were the learned men of Babylonia. In this way Babylonian

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7 Oesterley and Robinson, HI I 35.

8 Winckler, GI I 116.

9 "The Babylonian language ... prevailed, not only as the language of diplomatic intercourse, but also, to judge from the tablets ... found at Taanach ... for more local purposes and for correspondence between the local chiefs and officials." Cook, CAH II 333.

10 Cook, CAH II 334.

religious ideas were imported into Palestine, but they were not taken over without change. Winckler has suggested that the young students who acquired Babylonian religious ideas worked them out at home according to the views of their own people. In place of the Babylonian gods who created the world they set the native gods, or fitted them into the Babylonian system.[11] This process of adaptation would allow for both the similarities and the contrasts which we discover in comparing religion and literature in Babylonia and Palestine.

CANAANITE PSALM LITERATURE Such evidence as we have indicated above points to a line of relationship between the Babylonian and the Old Testament literatures through the early Palestinian literature which the Israelites inherited when they entered the land. This line of relationship would be strengthened if we could discover some of the early Palestinian, or Canaanite, literature. The existence of Canaanite psalm literature has been postulated recently, and since this hypothesis provides a possible link between the Babylonian and the Hebrew psalms, we will examine it.

Winckler discovered that certain passages in the Tell-el-Amarna letters sound like Hebrew psalms, and he first suggested that these might be quoted fragments of Canaanite psalms.[12] This theory was further advanced by Böhl, who studied the passages as poetry, discovered some evidence of

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11 See Winckler, GI I 121.
12 See Winckler, GI I 123.

meter, and reached the conclusion that the quotations indicate a rich treasure of hymnic literature which pre-Israelite Canaan possessed and which came to Israel as an inheritance.[13] Cook accepted the lyrical passages as examples of religious literature, which indicate the way men addressed their gods.[14]

The most thorough investigation in this field has been carried on by Jirku.[15] He has discovered passages practically identical in two or more letters by the same or different writers. In the course of his study he quotes twenty-four passages, but we will take the space here to show only one set of parallels: Nos. 15, 16, and 17.[16] Three men - Addudani,[17] Jahtiri,[18] and Tagi[19] - wrote to the king of Egypt in these words:

> I have looked this way and I have looked that way,
> But it did not become light.
> Then I looked up to the king, my lord,
> And it became light.
> Yea a brick may forsake its surrounding wall,
> But I forsake not the feet of the king, my lord.

In numbers 10 and 11 Jirku shows how Aziri of Amurru used the same words in identical passages from two letters.[20] The evidence from all the passages studied leads Jirku to conclude that they were quotations taken by

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13 See Böhl, TLB XXXV (1914) Nr. 15 338.

14 "The repeated lyrical utterances of Rib-Addi and Abdi-Khiba are early examples of the unrestrained laments of the later Israelites who appeal, not to a divine king of Egypt, their overlord, but to Yahweh; and it is because the Amarna letters are addressed to a king who is regarded as a god, or a representative of a god, that their language and ideas throw valuable light on the way in which men thought of their sacred beings." Cook, CAH II 338.

15 "Kana'anäische Psalmenfragemente usw," in JBL LII (1933) 108-120.

16 See Jirku, op. cit. pp. 116-117.

17 Knudtzon, Die El-Amarna Tafeln I 292 8-17.

18 Ditto 296 11-22.

19 Ditto 286 9-13. This passage contains one line not found in the

the scribes from existing pieces of literature, and the religious nature of the fragments indicates that the pieces of literature were psalms. To show the similarity between these fragments and the Old Testament literature parallels are pointed out between the fragments and passages from the Psalter. We will note only one of these. In a letter written by a man named Tagi to the king of Egypt, in the middle of a description of trivial happenings, we read these words:

> If we ascend to the heavens,
> If we descend to the earth,
> Our head is in thy hands. 21

Compare with this passage Psa. 139:8:

> If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. 22
> If I make my bed in the underworld, behold, thou art there.

The importance of Canaanite literature in the development of Old Testament psalms has been shown by Leslie, who says: "Immersion in these 'Psalm fragments' helps us to see how vitally the religious concepts, expressions, and style of such 'Canaanite Psalms' indirectly influenced biblical psalmists and prophets by creating literary forms for the expression of religious faith. Here is a religious vocabulary centuries before the Israelite psalmists and prophets began to write." 23

If we accept the conclusion that these passages are fragments from

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other two.

20 Ditto 165 4-8, 166 6-8.

21 Ditto 264 15-19. Jirku, op. cit. No. 14.

22 RV "If I make by bed in Sheol." The Hebrew word שאול means the underworld. Cf. Also Amos 9:2ff. Other parallels are cited by Jirku and by Leslie in OTR 135-138.

23 Leslie, OTR 137.

Canaanite psalm literature, we are faced with another question: Can we discover any similarities which would indicate a relationship between Canaanite psalm literature and Babylonian psalm literature? An extensive piece of research would have to be carried out to attempt a satisfactory answer to this question, but with the materials that we have at hand we may look at the possibility of such a relationship.

Jirku quotes the lament of the city of Tunip:

> But now weeps Tunip, thy city,
> And her tears flow, [24]
> And no one grasps our hand.

Here are a few lines from a lament of Nippur:

> The city to which its prince turns not in compassion
> sighs itself away into silence;
> To which he turns not, the city to which the prince
> turns not in compassion. [25]

On the holding of the hand note these words:

> I seek and no one takes me by the hand.
> I have wept, saying, "To my side they come not nigh." [26]

From a letter of the city Irḳata to the king of Egypt Jirku quotes these words:

> May the breath of the king not forsake us. [27]

Ashurbanipal prays to Ninlil in these words:

> Let thy good breath blow and the darkness be illuminated. [28]

A son of Aziri of Ammuru writes to an Egyptian official in these words:

> Thou givest me life, and thou givest me death. [29]

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24 Knudzton, op. cit. 59 39-42. Jirku No. 2. Note the parallel to Lam. 1:1.

25 Reisner, Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen (1896) No. 14. Langdon, SBP 97.

A prayer to Shamash says:

> Shamash, to give life to the dead,
> To free the bound, 30
> Stands in thy hand, Shamash.

CONCLUSIONS It may seem that in this chapter we have been dealing largely in hypothesis. What we have been doing is seeking a possible line of relationship between the Babylonian and the Hebrew psalm literatures which would explain how the Old Testament psalmists came to express their laments to Yahweh in the thought forms of Babylonian lamentations. The line which we have traced between them shows how Old Testament psalmody was developed under the influence of Canaanite psalmody, which the Israelites inherited from the previous inhabitants of the land. This Canaanite psalmody was in turn developed under the influence of Babylonian psalmody, introduced when Palestine was under the cultural domination of Babylonia.

We have seen that the experience of lamentation was a general one, and the forms of lamentation were an inheritance which the Israelites received indirectly from the early Babylonians. The Israelites, with their genius for religion, took these forms and made of the lamentation the great religious poetry that we find in the Old Testament Psalms.

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26 XXIII 60. Note also XVI 9.
27 Knudzton, op. cit. 100 36-38. Jirku No. 4. Cf. Job 27:3.
28 XVI Rev. 11.
29 Knudzton, op. cit. 169 7-10. Jirku No. 12.
30 XIII 7.

BABYLONIAN TEXTS

I

To Sin

King, BMS No. 1

1 O Sin! O Nanner! mighty one .....
2 O Sin! who art unique, thou that brightenest .....
3 That givest light unto the nations .....
4 That unto the black-headed race art favorable .....
5 Bright is thy light in heaven .....
6 Brilliant is thy torch, like the Fire-god .....
7 Thy brightness fills the whole earth.
8 The brightness of the nation he gathers, in thy sight .....
9 O Anu of the sky, whose purpose no man learns.
10 Overwhelming is thy light like the Sun-god [thy?] first-born.
11 Before thy face the great gods bow down, the fate of the world is set before thee.
12 In the evil of an eclipse of the Moon which in such and such a month and such and such a day has taken place.
13 In the evil of the powers, of the portents, evil and not good, which are in my palace and my land.
14 The great gods beseech thee and thou givest counsel.
15 They take their stand all of them, they petition at thy feet.
16 O Sin, glorious one of Ikur! they beseech thee and thou givest the oracle of the gods!
17 The end of the month is the day of thy oracle, the decision of the great gods;
18 The thirtieth day is thy festival, a day of prayer to thy divinity!
19 O God of the New Moon, in might unrivalled, whose purpose no man learns,
20 I have poured thee a libation of the night (with) wailing,
I have offered thee (with) shouts of joy a drink offering of .....
21 I am bowed down! I have taken my stand! I have sought for thee!
22 Do thou set favor and righteousness upon me!
23 May my god and my goddess, who for long have been angry with me,
24 In righteousness deal graciously with me! Let my way be propitious with joy .....
25 And ZA.GAR, the god of dreams hath sent,
26 In the night season ..... my sin may I hear my iniquity may .....
27 Forever may I bow myself in humility before thee!

To Tashmitu

"After addressing the goddess by name her suppliant continues:-"
38 I so and so, son of so and so, whose god is so and so, whose goddess is so and so
39 In the evil of an eclipse of the Moon, which in such and such a month on such and such a day has taken place

40 In the evil of the powers, of the portents, evil and not good, which are in my palace and my land,
41 Have turned towards thee! I have established thee! Listen to the incantation!
42 Before Nabu thy spouse, the lord, the prince, the first-born son of Isagila, intercede for me!
43 May he harken to my cry at the word of thy mouth; may he remove my sighing, may he learn my supplication!
44 At his mighty word may my god and goddess deal graciously with me!
45 May the sickness of my body be torn away; may the groaning of my flesh be consumed!
46 May the consumption of my muscles be removed!
47 May the poisons that are on me be loosened!
48 May the ban be torn away, may the ... be consumed!
49 May .....; at thy command may mercy be established!
50 May god and king ordain favor at thy mighty command that is not altered
51 And thy true mercy that changes not, O lady Tashmitu!
The catch-line reads: "O Lord that directest the multitude of the peoples, the whole of creation!"

"No. 1 (K155) consists of the upper part of a large tablet of which fully half has been broken away. The text in its present condition falls into three main sections: (a) Lines 1-27, a prayer to Sin on the occasion of an eclipse of the moon, (b) Lines 29-35, the opening lines of a prayer to Ishtar, and (c) Lines 36-51, the conclusion of a prayer to Tashmitu, which like (a) is directed against the evils resulting from a lunar eclipse."

II
To Ninib
King, BMS No.2

11 O mighty son, first-born of Bil!
12 Powerful, perfect, offspring of Isara,
13 Who art clothed with terror, who art full of fury,
14 O Utgallu (?), whose onslaught is unopposed,
15 Mighty is (thy) palace among the great gods.
16 In Ikur, the house of decisions, exalted are thy heads,
17 And Bil, the father has granted thee
18 That the law of all the gods thy hand should hold,
19 Thou judgest the judgments of mankind.
20 Thou leadest him that is without a leader, the man that is in need
21 Thou holdest the hand of the weak, thou exaltest him that is not strong.
22 The body of the man that to the Lower World has been brought down thou dost restore.
23 From him who sin possesses, the sin thou dost remove.
24 Thou art quick to favor the man with whom his god is angry.
25 O Ninib, prince of the gods, a hero art thou.
26 I so and so, son of so and so, whose god is so and so, whose goddess is so and so.
27 Have bound for thee a cord, ... have I offered thee;
28 I have offered thee tarrinnu, a pleasant odor;
29 I have poured out for thee mead, a drink from corn.
30 With thee may there stand the gods of Bil!
31 With thee may there stand the gods of Ikur!
32 Truly pity me and hearken to my cries!
33 My sighing remove and accept my supplication!
34 Let my cry find acceptance before thee!
35 Deal favorably with me who fear thee!
36 Thy face have I beheld, let me have prosperity!
37 Thou art pitiful! Truly pity me!
38 Take away my sin, my iniquity remove!
39 Tear away my disgrace and my offence do thou loosen!
40 May my god and my goddess command me and may they ordain good fortune!
41 May I praise thy heart, may I bow in humility before thee!

"The first eight lines contain the end of a prayer to Tashmitu. Lines 9-10 form a colophon containing directions for ceremonies. Lines 11-41 a complete prayer addressed to Ninib."

III
To Ishtar
King, BMS No. 8

1 ..... good is thy supplication when the spirit (?) of thy name is propitious.
2 Thy regard is prosperity, thy command is light!
3 Have mercy on me, O Ishtar! Command abundance!
4 Truly pity me and take away my sighing!
5 .....
6 Thy ..... have I held: let me bring joy of heart!
7 I have borne thy yoke: do thou give consolation!
8 I have ..... thy head: let me enjoy success and favor!
9 I have protected thy splendor: let there be good fortune and prosperity!
10 I have sought thy light: let my brightness shine!
11 I have turned towards thy power: let there be life and peace!
12 Propitious be the favorable sidu who is before thee: may the lamassu that goeth behind thee be propitious!
13 That which is on thy right hand increase good fortune:that which is on thy left hand attain favor!
14 Speak and let the word be heard!
15 Let the word I speak, when I speak, be propitious!
16 Let health of body and joy of heart be my daily portion!
17 My days prolong, life bestow: let me live, let me be perfect, let me behold thy divinity!
18 When I plan, let me attain (my purpose): Heaven be thy joy, may the Abyss hail thee!
19 May the gods of the world be favorable to thee: may the great gods delight thy heart!

IV
To Marduk
King, BMS No. 9

1 O mighty, powerful, strong one of Assur!
2 O noble, exalted, first-born of Ia!
3 O Marduk, the mighty, who causeth Itura to rejoice,
4 Lord of Isagila, Help of Babylon, Lover of Izida,
5 Preserver of life, Prince of I.MAH.TIL.LA, Renewer of life!
6 Shadow of the land, Protector of distant peoples!
7 Forever the Sovereign of shrines!
8 Forever is thy good name in the mouth of the peoples!
9 O Marduk, mighty lord .....
10 At thy exalted command let me live, let me be perfect
11 and let me behold thy divinity!
12 When I plan, let me attain (my purpose)!
13 Cause righteousness to dwell in my mouth!
14 ..... mercy in my heart!
15 Return and be established! May they command mercy!
16 May my god stand at thy right hand!
17 May my goddess stand at thy left hand!
18 May my god, who is favorable, stand firmly at my side,
19 To give utterance, to command, to hearken and show favor!
20 Let the word I speak, when I speak, be propitious!
21 O Marduk, mighty lord, command life!
22 The life of my life do thou command!
23 Before thee brightly have I bowed (?) myself, let me be satisfied!
24 May Bil be thy light, may Ia shout with joy unto thee!
25 May the gods of the world be favorable to thee!
26 May the great gods delight thy heart!

V
To Bil
King, BMS No. 19

4 O Lord, O Lord, O Lord! .....
5 Father of the great [gods?]!
6 The lord of destinies, the [god?] of charms!
7 The ruler of heaven and earth, the lord of lands!
8 Perfect in judgment, whose word is not altered!
9 Director of destinies .....
10 In the evil of the eclipse of the moon which in the month (space)
on the day (space) has taken place,
11 In the evil of the powers, of the portents, evil and not good,
12 Which are in my palace and my land!
13 At thy command created was mankind!
14 Unto king and noble their names thou didst name!
15 Since to create god and king
16 Rests with thee!

"In lines 17ff the suppliant states he has made an offering to the god consisting apparently of three plants, and he therefore seeks the god's protection for himself and for his posterity. ('The destiny of my life decree! The making of my name do thou command!'). The prayer concludes with the desire that the god will confer blessings through his attendant minister, the sidu."

29 May the sidu command favor upon favor,
30 daily may he go with me,
31 Through thy exalted command which is not altered,
32 And thy sure mercy which changeth not!

"The beginning of the prayer, with which the Obverse commenced, has been broken off; it probably contained, however, an invocation of the god, of which the conclusion, describing his power as ruler and creator, has been preserved."

VI
To Marduk
King, BMS No. 12 (IV R57)

17 O Marduk hero, lord of lords, the mighty .....
18 Powerful, unique, perfect .....
19 The exalted hero, who suffers no change .....
20 The strong one, the king who .....
21 O Marduk the illustrious, the great one who .....
22 The mighty ..... the illustrious!
23 The storm of the weapon, the battle.
24 O .... the perfect.
25 ..... the great
26 ..... Marduk, the lord .....
27 O Marduk the lord.
28 Lord of the heavens, of mountains and of oceans, who ... the hills.
29 Lord of ... and fortresses, who guideth the rivers.
30 Who bestoweth corn and grain (?), who createth wheat and barley, who reneweth the green herb.
31 Who createth the handiwork of god and goddess; in the midst of their ... art thou.
32 The ruler of the Anunnaki, the director of the Igigi.
33 The wise, the first-born of Ia, the creator of the whole of mankind.
34 Thou art lord, and like my father and my mother among the ..... art thou.
35 Thou art like the Sun-god also; their darkness thou dost lighten.
36 A cry and a shout of joy ...
37 Thou guidest him that is in need ...
38 Their wisdom ....
39 Lands and distant peoples ....
40 Thou art compassionate ....
41 I am weak ...
42 .....
43 Thou holdest his hand ...
44

At line 45 the suppliant makes a formal statement of his own name along with that of his father, after which the tablet continues broken for a few lines .... When the lines once more become connected we find the suppliant imploring that the life of his body may be restored, the disease from which he is suffering being put down to the influence of magic. He concludes a description of his symptoms with the words: 'My powers and my soul are bewitched and there is no righteous decision.' He therefore makes a direct appeal to the god in the following words:

59 O lord, at this time stand beside me and hearken to my cries, give my judgment, make my decision.
60 The sickness ... do thou destroy, and take thou away the disease of my body.
61 O my god and my goddess, judge ye mankind and possess me.

62 By the command of thy mouth may there never approach anything evil, the magic of the sorcerer and the sorceress.
63 May there never approach me the poisons of the evil ... of men.
64 May there never approach the evil of dreams, of powers (and) portents of heaven and of earth.
65 Never may the evil of the portents of city and land overtake me.
66 In spite of the evil mouth, the evil tongue of men, in thy sight let me be perfect.
67 Let nothing ever restrain the plant of the god of joy that is placed upon my neck.
68 The evil curse, the mouth that is unprofitable let it cast aside.
69 Like alabaster let my light shine, let me never have affliction.

Reverse.

70 Like lapis-lazuli may my life be precious in thy sight, let it establish mercy.
71 Like gold, O my god and my goddess, may prosperity be with me.
72 In the mouth of the peoples may I be blessed.
73 Like a seal may my sins be torn away.
74 May the evil curse, that is unprofitable, never draw nigh, may it never be oppressive.
75 Before thee may my name and posterity prosper.
76 May the plants and ... that are set before thee loosen my sin.
77 Never may there approach me the wrath or anger of the god.
78 With misery, disgrace (and) sin; from the curse
79 May the raising of my hand, the invocation of the great gods, give release.
80 At thy mighty command let me approach! Command thou life.
81 Like heaven may I shine among the enchantments that possess me.
82 Like the earth may I be bright in the midst of spells that are not good.
83 Like the heart of heaven may I be bright; may the power of my sins be destroyed.
84 May the binu wood purify me, may the ... plant deliver me, may the ukuru wood remove my sin.

85 May Marduk's flaming vessel of purification bestow favor.
86 May the flaming censer (?) of the god ... make me bright.
87 At the command of Ia, king of the Abyss, father of the gods, the lord of wisdom.
88 At the raising of my hand may thy heart have rest, O Marduk, the priest of the great gods, the arbiter of the Igigi.
89 The word of Ia let me glorify, and, O queen Damkina, let me have dominion.
90 May I thy servant so and so, the son of so and so, live, let me be perfect.
91 Let me reverence thy divinity, and let me bow in humility before thee.

VII
To Nabu
King, BMS No. 22

1 O hero, prince, first-born of Marduk!
2 O prudent ruler, offspring of Zarpanitu!
3 O Nabu, bearer of the tablet of the destiny of the gods, director of Isagila!
4 Lord of Izida, shadow of Borsippa!
5 Darling of Ia, giver of life!
6 Prince of Babylon, protector of the living!
7 God of the hill of dwelling, the fortress of the nations, the Lord of temples!
8 Thy name is .... in the mouth of the peoples, O sidu!
9 O son of the mighty prince Marduk, in thy mouth is justice!
10 In thy illustrious name, at the command of thy mighty godhead,
11 I so and so, the son of so and so, who am smitten with disease, thy servant,
12 Whom the hand of the demon and the breath of the ....
13 May I live, may I be perfect .....
14 Set justice in my mouth!
15 ..... mercy in my heart!
16 Return and be established! May they command mercy!
17 May my god stand at my right hand!
18 May my goddess stand at my left hand!
19 May the favorable sidu, the favorable lamassu ..... with me!

On the conclusion of the prayer there follows a section of four lines containing directions for the making of certain offerings, and the commencement of an incantation, both of which are much broken. On the Reverse of the tablet is inscribed the conclusion of a prayer, which may possibly be the continuation of that which commences at the end of the Obverse. The sick man, after making a formal statement in line 51 of his own name and that of his father, concludes the prayer with the following petitions.

56 At this time ....
57 I stand before thee ...
58 Good is thy shadow ....
59 May my way be propitious ....
60 Set a pleasant path for my feet!
61 O lord, my god, deal graciously with me!
62 O lord, Nabu, my god, deal graciously with me!
63 In the night season may my dreams be propitious!
64 Mercy, compassion, (and) life, O sidu,
65 Command, grant my petition and establish me!
66 At the command of thy mighty godhead let me live, let me have knowledge!
67 In the sight of (?) wide-spread peoples may I bow in humility before thee!

VIII
To Nirgal
King, BMS No. 27

1 O mighty lord, hero, first-born of NU.NAM.NIR!
2 Prince of the Anunnaki, lord of the battle!
3 Offspring of KU.TU.SAR the mighty queen!
4 O Nirgal, strong one of the gods, the darling of NIN.MIN.NA!
5 Thou treadest in the bright heavens, lofty is thy place!
6 Thou art exalted in the Under-world and art the benefactor of its ...
7 With Ia among the multitude of the gods inscribe thy counsel!
8 With Sin in the heavens thou seekest all things!
9 And Bil thy father has granted thee that the black-headed race, all living creatures,
10 The cattle of Nirgal, created things, thy hand should rule!
11 I so and so, the son of so and so am thy servant.
12 The .... of god and goddess are laid upon me.
13 Uprooting and destruction are in my house.
14 .....
15 Since thou are beneficent, I have turned to thy divinity!
16 Since thou art compassionate, I have sought for thee!
17 Since thou art pitiful, I have beheld ....
18 Since thou art merciful, I have taken my stand before thee.
19 Truly pity me and hearken to my cries!
20 May thine angry heart have rest!
21 Loosen my sin, my offence ....
22 .....
23 O god and angry goddess .....
24 Let me talk of thy greatness, let me bow in humility before thee.

IX
To Tashmitu
King, BMS No. 33

1 ..... O goddess .....
2 Who causeth her word to be obeyed, who establisheth ...
3 Who appeaseth the anger of god and ....
4 Who heareth prayer and supplication!
5 Who accepteth petition and sighing ! ....
8 O seed of Izida, the house of the living creature of the great gods!
9 Queen of Borsippa, Lady of the Dwelling!
10 O lady Tashmitu, whose command is mighty!

"The next few lines are broken. After stating (line 14) that he is crying before the goddess, the suppliant describes her merciful character, as the giver of peace and prosperity. At line 20 he once more addresses her by name and proceeds to make his request."

20 O Tashmitu, goddess of supplication, and love, lady of ....
21 I so and so, the son of so and so, whose god is so and so and whose goddess is so and so,
22 Have turned towards thee, O lady! Hearken to my supplication.
23 Before Nabu thy spouse, the lord, the prince, the first-born son
24 Of Isagila, intercede for me!
25 May he hearken to my cry at the word of my mouth!
26 May he remove my sighing, may he learn my supplication!
27 At his mighty word may god and goddess deal graciously with me!
28 May the sickness of my body be torn away.
29 May the groaning of my flesh be consumed.
30 May the consumption of my muscles be removed.
31 ..... sorcery, poison .....
32 May the ban be torn away, may the .... be consumed.
33 May .....
34 May mercy be established among men (and their) habitations!
35 May god and king ordain favor
36 At thy mighty command that is not altered, and thy true mercy,
37 O lady Tashmitu!

(Tablet A reads for 31, "May the poisons that are upon me be loosened.")

X
To Sibziana
King, BMS No. 50

1 O Sibziana .....
2 Thou that changest the .....
3 In the heavens .....
4 They bow before thee .....
5 The great gods beseech thee and .....
6 Without thee Anu .....
7 Bil the arbiter .....
8 Ramman the prince of heaven and earth .....
9 At thy command mankind was named.
10 Give thou the word and with thee let the great gods stand.
11 Give thou me judgment, make my decision.
12 I, thy servant, Assurbanipal, the son of his god,
13 Whose god is Assur, whose goddess is Assuritu,
14 In the evil of the eclipse of the moon which in the month (space) on the day (space) has taken place,
15 In the evil of the powers, of the portents, evil and not good,
16 Which are in my palace and my land.
17 Because of the evil magic, the disease that is not good, the iniquity,
18 The transgression, the sin that is in my body ...
19 [Because of] the evil spectre that is bound to me and ...
20 Have petitioned thee, I have glorified thee!
21 The raising of my hand accept! Hearken to my prayer!
22 Free me from my bewitchment! Loosen my sin!
23 Let there be torn away whatsoever of evil may come to cut off my life!
24 May the favorable sidu be ever at my head!
25 May the god, the goddess of mankind grant me favor!
26 At thy command let me live!
27 Let me bow down and extol thy greatness!

'The prayer is inscribed to the star Sibziana, addressed as a male deity, and invoked in lines 1-9 in somewhat extravagant terms. The object of the prayer is to induce Sibziana to remove the evil spells, bewitchments, possession by spectres, etc., that have followed in the train of the lunar eclipse.'

XI
To Ishtar
King, STC p. 222ff

1 I pray unto thee, lady of ladies, goddess of goddesses!
2 O Ishtar, queen of all peoples, directress of mankind.
3 O Irnini, thou art raised on high, mistress of the Spirits of heaven;
4 Thou art mighty, thou hast sovereign power, exalted is thy name.
5 Thou art the light of heaven and earth, O valiant daughter of the Moon-god.
6 Ruler of weapons, arbitress of the battle.
7 Framer of all decrees, wearer of the crown of dominion.
8 O lady, majestic is thy rank, over all the gods it is exalted.
9 Thou art the cause of lamentation, thou sowest hostility among brethren who are at peace.
10 Thou art the bestower of strength.
11 Thou art strong, O lady of victory, thou canst violently attain my desire.
12 O Gutira, who art girt with battle, who art clothed with terror,
13 Thou wieldest the sceptre and the decision, the control of earth and heaven.
14 Heavenly chambers, shrines, divine dwellings, and temples worship thee.
15 Where is thy name not (heard)? Where is thy decree not (obeyed)?
16 Where are thine images not made? Where are thy temples not founded?
17 Where art thou not great? Where art thou not exalted?
18 Anu, Bel, and Ea have raised thee on high, among the gods have they made great thy dominions.
19 They have exalted thee among all the Spirits of heaven, they have made thy rank pre-eminent.
20 At the thought of thy name the heaven and the earth quake.
21 The gods tremble, and the Spirits of the earth falter.
22 Mankind prayeth homage unto thy mighty name,
23 For thou art great, and thou art exalted.
24 All mankind, the whole human race, boweth down before thy power.
25 Thou judgest the cause of men with justice and righteousness;
26 Thou lookest with mercy on the violent man, and thou settest right the unruly every morning.
27 How long wilt thou tarry, O lady of heaven and earth, shepherdess of those that dwell in human habitations?
28 How long wilt thou tarry, O lady of the holy E-anna, the pure storehouse?
29 How long wilt thou tarry, O lady whose feet are unwearied, whose knees have not lost their vigor?
30 How long wilt thou tarry, O lady of all fights and of the battle?
31 O thou glorious one, that ragest among the Spirits of heaven, that subduest angry gods,

32 Thou hast power over all princes, that controllest the sceptre of kings.
33 That openest the bonds of all handmaids,
34 That art raised on high, that art firmly established, O valiant Ishtar, great is thy might.
35 Bright torch of heaven and earth, light of all dwellings.
36 Terrible in the fight, one who cannot be opposed, strong in the battle.
37 O whirlwind, that roarest against the foe and cuttest off the mighty,
38 O furious Ishtar, summoner of armies.
39 O goddess of men, O goddess of women, thou whose counsel none may learn.
40 Where thou lookest in pity, the dead man lives again, the sick is healed;
41 The afflicted is saved from his affliction, when he beholdeth thy face.
42 I, thy servant, sorrowful, sighing, and in distress cry unto thee.
43 Look upon me, O my lady, and accept my supplication.
44 Truly pity me, and hearken unto my prayer.
45 Cry unto me, "It is enough," and let thy spirit be appeased.
46 How long shall my heart be afflicted, which is full of sorrow and sighing?
47 How long shall my omens be grievous in restlessness and confusion?
48 How long shall my house be troubled, which mourneth bitterly?
49 How long shall my spirit (be troubled), which aboundeth in sorrow and sighing?
50 O [...] Irnini, fierce lioness, may thy heart have rest!
51 Is anger mercy? Then let thy spirit be appeased.
52 May thine eyes rest with favor upon me;
53 With thy glorious regard truly in mercy look upon me.
54 Put an end to the evil bewitchments of my body; let me behold thy clear light,
55 How long, O my lady, shall mine enemies persecute me?
56 How long shall they advise evil in rebellion and wickedness?
57 And in my pursuits and my pleasures shall they rage against me?
58 How long, O my lady, shall the ravenous demon pursue me?
59 They have caused me continuous affliction, but I have praised thee.
60 The weak have become strong, but I am weak;
61 I am sated like a flood which the evil wind maketh to rage.
62 My heart hath taken wing and hath flown away like a bird of the heavens.
63 I moan like a dove, night and day;
64 I am made desolate, and I weep bitterly;
65 With grief and woe my spirit is distressed.
66 What have I done, O my god and my goddess?
67 Is it because I feared not my god or my goddess that trouble hath befallen me?
68 Sickness, disease, ruin and destruction are come upon me;

69 Troubles, turning away of the countenance, and fulness of anger are my lot,
70 And the indignation of the wrath of all gods and men.
71 I have beheld, O my lady, days of affliction, months of sorrow, years of misfortune;
72 I have beheld, O my lady, slaughter, turmoil, and rebellion.
73 Death and misery have made an end of me.
74 My need is grievous, grievous is my humiliation;
75 Over my house, my gate, and my fields is affliction poured forth.
76 As for my god, his face is turned elsewhere;
77 My strength is brought to naught, my power is broken.
78 But unto thee, O my lady, do I give heed, I have kept thee in my mind;
79 Unto thee, therefore do I pray, dissolve my ban.
80 Dissolve my sin, my iniquity, my transgression, and my offence.
81 Forgive my transgression, accept my supplication.
82 Secure my deliverance, and let me be loved and carefully tended.
83 Guide my footsteps in the light, that among men I may gloriously seek my way.
84 Say the word, that at thy command my angry god may have mercy,
85 And that my goddess, who is wroth, may turn again.
86 The darkness hath settled down, so let my brazier be bright.
87 Thou art the ruler, let then my torch flame forth.
88 May my scattered strength be collected;
89 May the fold be wide, and may my pen be bolted fast.
90 Receive the abasement of my countenance, give ear unto my prayer.
91 Truly pity me and [accept my supplication].
92 How long, O my lady, wilt thou be angry and thy face be turned away?
93 How long, O my lady, wilt thou rage and thy spirit be full of wrath?
94 Incline thy neck, which (is turned) away from my affairs, and set prosperity before thy face;
95 As by the solving waters of the river may thine anger be dissolved.
96 My mighty foes may I trample like the ground;
97 And those who are wroth with me mayest thou force into submission and crush beneath my feet.
98 Let my prayer and my supplication come unto thee,
99 And let thy great mercy be upon me,
100 That those who behold me in the street may magnify thy name.
101 And that I may glorify thy godhead and thy might before mankind.
102 Ishtar is exalted! Ishtar is queen!
103 My lady is exalted! My lady is queen!
104 Irnini, the valiant daughter of the Moon-god, hath not a rival.

---

105 Prayer of the Raising of the Hand to Ishtar.

---

106 This shalt thou do ... a green bough shalt thou sprinkle with pure water; four bricks from a ruin shalt thou set in place;

107 A lamb shalt thou take; and with sarbatu-wood shalt thou fill (the censer) and thou shalt set fire (thereto); sweet-scented woods, some upunto-plant, and some
108 cypress wood shalt thou heap up; a drink offering shalt thou offer, but thou shalt not bow thyself down. This incantation
109 before the goddess Ishtar three times shalt thou recite .... and thou shalt not look behind thee.

---

110 "O exalted Ishtar, that givest light unto the (four) quarters of the world!"
111 (This) copy from Borsippa (made) like unto its original, hath Nergal-balatsu-ikbi, the son of Atared-kalme, the magician,
112 written for (the preservation of) his life, and he hath revised it, and hath deposited it within the temple of E-sagila.

XII
Obverse (Fragment)
Langdon, BPP 23. Pl. IV

1 I will speak of my deeds, my unspeakable deeds.
3 I will relate my words, my words I will tell,
5 My deeds which have been done, these which are unrepeatable.
7 I weep and cease not to lament.
9 In repose (during the night) sighing is uttered.
12 Daily I am filled with crying and moaning.
13 In sorrow of heart I have uttered wailing to thee sorrowfully, hear thou me.
15 Be present at my prayer, hear my petition.
17 I, thy servant, am prostrate before thee.
19 .....
I have sought after thy place.

XIII
To Shamash
VAT 5 Stummer, SP 8

1 Incantation. Shamash, king of heaven and earth,
2 Lord of right and righteousness.
3 Lord of the Anunnaki, Lord of the Igigi,
4 Whose will no god
5 Opposes, whose command
6 No strength hinders.
7 Shamash, to give life to the dead,
8 To free the bound,
9 Stands in thy hand, Shamash.
10 I, thy servant so and so, son of so and so.
11 Whose god is Marduk, whose goddess
12 Is Sarpanit,
13 Before thee .....
15 I hold thy robe.
16 On account of the evil of a serpent, which in my house
17 Has appeared, gliding,
18 Has done (and) I saw (it)
19 I am in fear and anguish
20 And confusion. This evil remove from me.
21 Thy greatness will I honor,
22 Will serve thee obediently.
23 Those who see me
24 Shall forever obediently
25 Serve thee.

XIV
To Tammuz and Ishtar, in Sickness

PSBA XXXI Plate VI — Pinches, PSBA XXXI 63

Say this[1] three times before Ishtar, and repeat and say this three times:

1 Thou, Ishtar, whose spouse is Tammuz, daughter of Sin, the heroine traversing the land,
2 She who loveth reproduction, she who loveth all men art thou.
3 I have given thee the great gift:
4 A salla of lapis-lazuli; a multi of gold, the adornment of thy divinity.
5 To Tammuz, thy spouse, take my pledge,
6 May Tammuz, thy spouse, take away my indisposition.
7 Say this before Ishtar three times, and before Tammuz say this:

8 Tammuz lord, lord, shepherd of heaven, son of Ea thou art,
9 Husband of Ishtar, the bride, ruler of the land,
10 Clothed with healing, bearing the shepherd's staff,
11 Creating the seed of cattle, lord of the stalls,
12 Eater of pure (food), a preparation of spice(?)
13 Drinker of the waters of the consecrated receptacles.[2]
14 I so and so, son of so and so, whose god is so and so, turn to thee, I seek thee.
15 The evil spy, the adversary,
16 Who with me is bound and stands against me for evil,
17 Yea, the evil spy, the adversary, who with me is bound,
18 Unto the mighty Humba demon foreboding consign him.
19 From me may he be detached. Grant me the breath of life.
20 And from my body remove him; take him with thee.
21 I thy servant would live and prosper to sing thy praise.
22 For an omen of days of life thee I seek.
23 Thy greatness I will glorify, thy praise I will sing.

---

1 Apparently the prayer which preceded, and of which the last line, defective, remains.
2 This translation from Pinches is compared with, and the arrangement of lines taken from, a translation in Langdon, TI 35. Langdon translates these two lines in this way:

Eater of roasted cakes, baked cakes of the oven.
Drinking the holy waters of the pouch.

XV

To Shamash, for a woman approaching childbirth

Meek, BA I No. 1

Obverse

1 Incantation. O Shamash, child of Anu, the lord.
3 O Shamash! son who lightest up the darkness,
5 Offspring of Sin and Nirgal,
7 Lord of Sippar, protector of E-babbar,
9 Beloved of A-a, the bride who dwelleth in the shining heavens,
11 O Shamash, when thou comest forth from the shining heavens,
13 When thou crossest the mountain, Hasur.
15 May Bunene, the messenger, speak joy to thy heart.
17 May truth stand at thy right hand.
19 May justice stand at thy left hand.
21 Pride of the lands art thou,
22 Exalted judge, who rulest the land above and below.
25 O Shamash! exalted judge, father of the black-headed race,
27 May this woman be cleansed (?) !
29 May her bonds be loosed in the presence of thy divinity.

Reverse

1 May this woman bare safely.
3 May she bear and may she live and may her child thrive.
5 In the presence of thy divinity may she pass her life prosperously.
7 May she bear safely and may she worship thee.
9 May enchantment and sorcery be cast off in the presence of thy divinity.
11 Like a dream may they be cast off.
12 Like a date may they be plucked away.
13 May this woman live.
14 As long as she lives, may she proclaim thy greatness.
16 Thy greatness, O Marduk,[1] May she make known to the people of the king of Chaldea,[2]
18 And I, the magician, thy servant, will worship thee.

---

1 Equals Shamash
2 Sum. her people.

XVI

Prayer of Ashurbanipal to Ninlil

Langdon, BPP Pl. XIII Langdon, BPP 72

1 .... who causes .... to take ...
2 She rules the .....
3 ..... bestower of scepter, throne and a long (?) reign.
4 Who multiplies their offspring, who fashions all things,
5 ..... at her wisdom the Igigi tremble.
6 [At her .....] the Anunnaki stand in terror.
7 Mankind, the dark-headed race, pray unto thee for their life.
8 [Queen merciful] and gracious, who dispenses mercy.
9 [She that makes glad the heart] of him in distress, who takes hold of the hands in time of trouble.
10 Who looks upon the despised and down-trodden, who gives life to the dying.
11 Who supports the weak and the feeble, they that live in poverty.
12 ..... queen, mistress of mercy and comfort.
13 Thou dispensest mercy, thou causest to have peace.
14 Ninlil, bestower of happiness and life unto him that seeks her place.
15 I, thy servant, Ashurbanipal, whom thy hands have made,
16 Whom thou, O queen, without father and mother, hast reared unto highness,
17 Thy ..... whom thou hast succored unto life, and whose soul thou hast protected,
18 I speak of the <u>deeds</u> of thy mightiness, thy grace I praise.
19 .....
20 .....

Reverse

1 ..... <u>mistress</u> of propriety (?) .....
2 ..... obtain for me .....
3 [Ninlil, mistress] of the gods, I have turned unto thee.
4 [To spare] and to show favor thou knowest; thy mantle I have laid hold upon.
5 ..... I carry, and know not how to bear it.
6 By transgression, known and unknown, I am become weak.
7 [Because of the evil] which I have done, or have not done, may I not perish, O my queen.
8 [Because of the sin] which since the time of my youth I have borne,
9 And which the apostle of God has discovered or not discovered, I have suffered greatly.
10 Daily, O my lady, may my woe be expelled,
11 Let thy good breath blow and the darkness be illumined.
12 In the distress and calamity which oppress (me), take thou my hand.
13 May not mine offender prosper, who exults over me.

14 [May I live and prosper] and the greatness of thy divinity ever shall I cherish.

---

15 ..... the desire of the heart, a petition to Ninlil, the queen, the merciful one unto those who stand in awe of her.

XVII

Prayer of Ashurnasirpal I to the Ishtar of Nineveh

81-2-4, 188 Brünnow, ZA V 69

Brünnow, ZA V 66

1 The matter which has befallen me, [even the sorrows] in words I will rehearse,
2 Unto the creatress of peoples, [her to whom] praise belongs,
3 Unto her who sits in Emasmas [divine Ishtar] who has extolled my name.
4 Unto the queen of the gods by whose hands the laws of the gods are fulfilled,
5 Unto the lady of Nineveh, sister of the lofty gods,
6 Unto the daughter of Sin, twin sister of Shamash, who rules over all kings.
7 Unto her who renders decisions, goddess of all things,
8 Unto the lady of heaven and earth who receives supplication,
9 Unto her who hears petition, who entertains prayer,
10 Unto the compassionate goddess who loves righteousness,
11 Ishtar the queen, whom all that is confused oppresses,
12 The woes as many as I see I will weep before thee.
13 To my sorrowful discourse may thy ear be given.
14 At my painful account may thy soul be appeased.
15 Behold me, O lady, that by thy repentance the heart of thy servant may be strong.
16 I, Ashurnasirpal, the afflicted, thy servant,
17 The humble, fearing the divinity, the thoughtful, thy beloved,
18 Establishing thy regular bread offerings unceasingly, giving thy sacrifices.
19 Desiring thy feasts, causing thy sanctuaries to be adorned,
20 Making to abound wine, the joy of thy heart which thou lovest,
21 Son of Shamshi-Adad, a king, fearer of the great gods,
22 I was created in the mountains which no one knows.
23 I was without understanding, and thy rulership I implored not steadfastly.
24 The peoples of Assyria knew not of thy divinity and received it not.
25 Thou, Ishtar, art the fearful dragon of the gods.
26 With a look of thine eyes thou didst know me and didst long for my ruling.
27 Thou didst take me from the mountains and didst call me for a shepherd of the peoples.
28 Thou hast assured me a sceptre of sanctuaries for the endurance of habitations.
29 Thou, Ishtar, hast made my name famous.
30 Thou hast granted to save and spare the faithful.
31 From thy mouth went forth (the command) to repair the ruined (temples) of the gods.
32 And so the tottering temples I have repaired,
33 The devastated gods I built and restored them to their place.

34 The property and offerings of cakes I established for them forever.
35 I have caused to be made a bed of ebony, a resting-place well made, which will give thy divinity repose.
36 Whose frame within the crude gold has been made fittingly.
37 With choice stones of the mountains, precious, I adorned its construction.
38 I made it bright for beholding, I filled it with ....
39 I made it shine like the gleam of the sun ....
40 I placed it in Emasmas, the abode of her luxury .....
41 How have I despised thee? In [what have I sinned against thee?]
42 [My transgressions] thou hast counted and sickness I [behold daily].

Reverse

1 Steadfastly [I maintained thy worship].
2 Before thy divinity [I walked uprightly].
3 But as one who fears not thy divinity [altogether thou hast afflicted me].
4 Although I have no sin and committed no disgrace.
5 Yet ever am I cast down [in sorrow].
6 I am distressed and rest I have not.
7 From my royal throne I departed,
8 But to the meal which I prepare I come not nigh.
9 The wine offered in worship is turned to stench.
10 As for the palace and the revelry I am removed.
11 From the pleasure and joy of life I am excluded.
12 My eyes are sealed that I behold not.
13 I lift them not above the ground.
14 How long, O lady, shall sickness cease not, and my knees waver?

---

15 I am Ashurnasirpal the distressed who fears thee.
16 Who seizes the shawl of thy divinity, praying unto thy royal person,
17 Look upon me for I would implore thy divinity,
18 Since thou art enraged, have mercy upon me, may thy soul be appeased.
19 May grace strengthen thy heart toward me.
20 Cause my sickness to depart and remove my sin.
21 By thy command, O queen, may repose fall upon me,
22 The priest-king, thy favorite who is changeless ever.
23 Have mercy toward him and his misery cut off.
24 Plead thou his cause with thy beloved, the father of the gods, heroic Ashur.
25 For after days I will extol thy divinity,
26 [And thy sovereignty] I will magnify in [the assembly of gods, councillors] of heaven and earth.

XVIII
Prayer to Shamash by a Priest in a Ritual of Atonement

IV R 17 Langdon, BPP 45

1 O great lord, when thou goest up unto the center of the bright heavens,
3 O heroic, strong Shamash, when thou goest up into the center of the bright heavens,
5 When at the bar of bright heaven thou takest hold of the thong of the lock,
7 When at the bolt of bright heaven thou breakest through,
8 (When thou loosenest the bolt, &c.),
9 When thou openest the great gate of bright heaven,
11 When thou crossest the mighty .... of bright heaven,
13 Anu and Enlil salute thee joyfully;
17 ..... stands forth unto thee daily to pacify thy heart,
19 The wide-dwelling peoples of all the land wait for thee in state.
21 The great gods of heaven and earth stand forth unto thee.
23 Of the [Anunnaki] thou renderest the decision.
25 The .... thou seest.
27 .... thou causest the dark-headed people to have.
29 All tongues as one speech thou directest.
31 The ..... ly thou seest.
33 ..... night and day.
34 Thou causest the penalty of wickedness and wrong to pass away.
36 To free the bound, to heal the sick is in thy power.
38 The god of the man for his son's sake stands humbly before thee, to secure his release faithfully.
40 The lord has sent me.
42 The great lord of Eridu has sent me.
43 Stand forth and learn his command; his decision execute.
45 When thou enterest, thou guidest the dark-headed people.
47 The radiance of peace create for him; his sickness bring to good outcome.
49 A man, son of his god, has fallen on wickedness and vice,
51 His limbs are in pain, and painfully he sleeps in misery.
53 O Shamash look upon the lifting up of my hand.
55 Eat his bread, receive his libations and place him with his god.
57 By thy word may his wickedness be pardoned, his wrong-doing be effaced.

Reverse

1 May his ban be loosened, and in his illness may he live.
3 May this king live.
4 As long as he lives may he speak of thy greatness.
5 Let this king sing thy praises.
6 And I the magician, thy servant, will sing thy praises.

7 Incantation, a prayer of prostration to Shamash.

8 Incantation: I have called unto thee, O Shamash, in the midst of the bright skies.
9 Sit thou in the shadow of the cedar.
10 Verily thy feet are set upon the hill of cypress.
11 The lands shout to thee, they rejoice for thee, O praised one.
12 All peoples behold thy light.
13 Thy great net overwhelms all lands.
14 Thou art Shamash, who knowest all of them.
15 Destroyer of the wicked, who givest effect to the rituals of expiation.
16 For evil signs and omens, for disturbing and harmful dreams,
17 Severing the cord of evil, which destroys people and land.
18 The evil workers of sorcery, witchcraft, poison, I have designed before thee;
19 I have fashioned images of them with pure millet,
20 Of them who have exercised sorcery, who have planned things unpropitious.
21 Their heart plotted, being full of wickedness.
22 Assist, O Shamash, light of the great gods.
23 May I be stronger than the worker of my witchcraft.
24 May the god, my creator, stand at my side.
25 The washing of my mouth, the right use of my hands,
26 Correctly direct, O lord, light of the universe, Shamash, the judge.
27 Daily, monthly, yearly, ... undo their plots.
28 ..... may my bewitchment be undone,
29 [Accept my petition], undo my bands,
30 [And I thy servant] will sing [thy praises].

---

31 [This incantation the king] shall recite thrice.

---

32 Fourth tablet of the "house of washing."
33 Thou shalt perform the clean rituals of atonement for the king.
34 [The priest of incantation] shall wash his hands.

XIX

Priest's prayer to Aruru-Gula as Venus at the End of the Ritual.

KAR. 73, Reverse — Langdon, BPP 56

1 ..... on the man have mercy and .... thy ....
3 Thy .... from the foundation of heaven, [O propitious hierodule], like daylight is made glorious.
5 [Queen of Sumer], the pure, the far famed, daughter-in-law of Enlil, the love of Ninurta.
7 I, thy servant, unto thee in the midst of the far heavens have cried.
9 ..... I stand forth unto thee, I speak, O hear me, thou child-bearing mother.
11 Since I am ill, before thee I stand (saying), "How long, O my father?"
13 O great one, knower of sickness, thou art bestower of the breath of life.
17 O my lady, rest, have mercy.
19 O thou that deliverest the soul of him who knows not his sickness.
21 And as long as I live I will sing thy praises.
23 May he that sees me praise thy divinity.
25 As long as I live I will speak of thy greatness.
27 And I, the priest of magic, thy servant, verily, I am thine adorer.
28 And I, the priest of magic, thy servant, will sing thy praises.

XX

Priest's kisub to Marduk in an Incantation Ritual

IV R 29 No. 1 Langdon, BPP 58

Obverse II

9 Incantation .... great lord of the land, sovereign of the lands.
11 ..... first born son of Ea, who in heaven and earth has been made surpassing.
14 Great lord of the land, sovereign of the lands.
15 ..... god of gods.
17 ..... of heaven and earth, who a rival has not.
19 ..... of Anu and Enlil.
21 Merciful one among the gods.
23 Compassionate one, who loves to heal the dying.
25 Marduk, sovereign of heaven and earth.
28 King of Babylon, lord of Esagila.
29 King of Ezida, lord of Emahtila.
31 Heaven and earth are thine.
33 The spaces of heaven and earth are thine.
35 The incantation of life is thine.
37 The saliva of life is thine.
39 The holy curse of the nether sea is thine.
41 Mankind, the dark-headed people,
43 The creatures with the breath of life, as many as have names in the land.
45 The four regions, as many as there be,
47 The Igigi (six hundred gods) of the totality of heaven and earth, as many as there be.
49 Open their ears unto thee.

Reverse I

1 Thou art their god.
3 Thou art their protecting genius.
5 Thou art their healer.
7 Thou art their benefactor.
9 O merciful one among the gods,
11 O compassionate one who loves to heal the dying,
12 Marduk, sovereign of heaven and earth,
13 Thy name I have repeated, thy greatness I have rehearsed.
15 "The mention of thy name the gods glorify"; verily I will sing as thy praises.
19 As for him who is sick, may his sickness depart for thee.
21 Curse, asakku-disease, samanu disease,
23 Evil utukku, evil alu, evil ghoul, evil gallu, evil god, evil ambusher,
27 Fever-demon, Labasu-demon, the Seizer,

29 Wind-demon, wind-demoness, handmaid of the wind-demon,
31 Evil curse, foul asakku, disease unhealthy,
34 Evil machinations,
36 Headache and chill, flabbiness, uncleanness and despondency,
37 Fever and jaundice (?),
40 Evil one, evil eye, evil mouth, evil tongue,
42 [From the house may go away].
.....
[And I the magician, thy servant, will sing thy praises].

Incantation, a prayer of prostration to Marduk.

XXI

A Semitic Prayer in Part Song

IV R 54 No. 1 Langdon, BPP 61

Obverse II

Priest

2 ..... with him is bound.
3 ..... to fetter him.
4 ..... intelligence.
5 ..... him wailing and loud crying.
6 Sickness, headache, poison, misery,
7 Have rolled him over, even grief and despair.
8 Panting, terror, fright and fear,
9 Harass him removing far his will-power.
10 He has sinned, and woefully he weeps before thee.
11 His soul is darkened, and he hastens unto thee.
12 He is obsessed (with pain), tears he causes to fall like a shower.
13 He is enchained and sits down to cry like a woman in travail.
14 Like a mourner he causes lamentation to be uttered.
15 He speaks his humiliation in plaintive tone.
16 What the servant of the lord has said, what he has thought,
17 Verily he meditates upon, even those things unknown.

Penitent

18 Many are my wrong-doings, I have sinned in all ways.
19 But this [curse] may I pass over, and from distress may I escape.
20 O Marduk, many are my wrong-doings, I have sinned in all ways.
21 But this [curse] may I pass over, and from distress may I escape.

Priest

22 .... he bears punishment, he is clothed with fetters.
23 The plotters have seized him, bringing him to the place of judgment.
24 At the gate of thy retribution are his hands bound.
25 "He shall be freed" is thine to (command); (there is none other) who knows.
26 He speaks to thee in prayer.
27 May the recitations of the god Ea appease thy heart.
28 May his earnest supplication invoke thee on high to be merciful.
29 May songs of distress and pleas for mercy command from thee compassion.
30 Behold his distressful condition.
31 May thy heart repose; have mercy upon him.
32 Take thou his hand, absolve his wrong-doing.
33 Banish from him plague and distress.
34 In the gulf of a morass is thrown thy servant.
35 Cause to depart thy retribution; from the river draw him.
36 Break his chains, unfasten his bonds.
37 Lighten his confusion, entrust him unto his god, his maker.

38 Grant life unto thy servant, and verily he will praise thy heroism.
39 Thy greatness may he herald unto all habitations.
40 Receive his presents, accept his ransom.
41 Upon the soil of peace may he walk before thee.
42 Abundance and plenty may he shower upon thy sanctuary.
43 May his care for thy temple be steadfast.
44 May he cause to be poured upon thy gate-locks oil like water.
45 With fine oil may he lave thy thresholds.
46 May he lay before thee odors of cedar.
47 And pomegranate, the choicest, and the fattest of the corn.

Reverse I

1 O lord behold, thy distressed servant.
2 May thy breath blow and quickly release him.
3 Thy heavy retribution may he alleviate.
4 Undo his bonds, quickly may he breathe freely.
5 Break his chains, unfasten his bonds.
6 Look upon .... question him.
9 May he not bear culpability before thee; spare, O spare his soul.
10 What has the servant, the creation of thy hand devised?
11 If he ..... what then were his gain?
12 But ..... the servant shall fear his lord.
13 If he ..... what can he add unto god?
14 Only to seek for an answer "yes" or "no" from his lordship.
15 Is he able ..... to release from woe?
16 Only to ..... from his lordship.

XXII

Penitential Psalm to Enlil

IV R 21 No. 2 Langdon, BPP 1

A May the heart of the lord of the lands rejoice.
B May the heart of the lord of the faithful word rejoice.
C May the heart of the father of the land rejoice.
D May the heart of the shepherd of the dark-haired people rejoice.

1 May the heart of the wild ox, who scatters his people rejoice.
3 May the heart of him who allays rebellion rejoice.
5 May the heart of him who sleeps the sleep of perversity rejoice.
6 Whose heart is pure, whose heart is clean, whose heart is ...
8 Lord whose heart on high reposes not,
10 Lord whose heart beneath calms not,
12 Who above and beneath reposes not,
14 Who has crushed me, who has undone me,
16 Who has put affliction into my hand,
18 Who has put fear into my body,
20 Who the iris of my eye has filled with tears,
22 Who has crushed my heart and filled it with sorrow,
24 His pure heart I will appease;
intercession unto him will I speak.
26 May his heart by persuasion repose.
28 May his soul by persuasion repose.
30 "O heart repent, repent," be spoken unto him,
32 "O heart repose, repose," be spoken unto him.
34 O heart that meditates magnanimous things,
who renders judgment of himself.
36 To calm his heart may the Anunnaki stand in prayer.

Reverse
(Spoken by the Priest)

1 May the Anunnaki, who have been begotten by Anu,
utter petition unto thee.
3 May his god bring a burden of tears;
may he speak intercession unto thee.
5 When one sings the melody which appeases thee,
may thy heart be calmed.
8 May the lord, great priest-king, Ninursha
speak intercession unto thee.
10 May she that cries loudly, the Queen of Nippur,
utter petition unto thee.
12 May Ea, ram of the holy city,
speak intercession unto thee.
13 Mother of him of the far-famed house, Damgalnunna,
utter petition unto thee.

16 The faithful messenger, Nebo,
speak intercession unto thee.
18 Anmarur, lord of the mountains,
speak intercession unto thee.
19 Ashrat, Queen of the hills,
utter petition unto thee.
20 "Faithfully look upon me," may they say to thee.
21 "Turn thy neck unto him," may they say to thee.
22 "May thy heart repose," may they say to thee.
23 "May thy mind be at peace," may they say.
24 May thy heart like the heart of a child-bearing mother return to its place.
25 Like a child-bearing mother, like a begetting father, return to its place.

XXIII

Penitential Psalm to Any God

IV R 10 Langdon, BPP 39

1 Of my lord may the anger of his heart return to its place.
3 May the god who is unknown return to his place.
5 May the mother goddess[1] return to her place.
7 May the god, known or unknown, return to his place.
9 May the mother goddess, known or unknown, return to her place.
10 May the heart of my god return to its place.
12 May the heart of my mother goddess return to its place.
13 May my god and mother goddess return to their places.
15 May the god who has become enraged against me return to his place.
17 May the mother goddess who has become enraged against me return to her place.
19 The wrong which I have done I know not.
21 The wrong ...
22 Verily, god named me with a good name.
24 Verily, the mother goddess named me with a good name.
25 Verily, god called me by a good name.
27 Verily, the mother goddess called me by a good name.
28 Food of tears and lament I have eaten.
30 Waters of the ditch and ... I have drunk.
32 Have I defamed my god unwittingly?
34 Have I transgressed unwittingly against my mother goddess?
36 O my lord,
my wrong-doings are many, great are my sins.
38 O my god,
many are my wrong-doings, great are my sins.
39 O my mother goddess,
many are my wrong-doings, great are my sins.
40 O god, known or unknown,
many are my wrong-doings, great are my sins.
41 O mother goddess,
many are my wrong-doings, great are my sins.
42 The wrong which I have done I know not.
44 The sin which I have done I know not.
46 The insolence I have done I know not.
47 The transgression I have done I know not.
48 The lord in the anger of his heart beheld me.
50 God in the rage of his heart has turned against me.
52 The mother goddess has become incensed against me and has made me as one in dire straits.
54 God, known or unknown, has oppressed me.
56 A mother goddess, known or unknown, has afflicted me with sorrow.

58 I seek and no one takes me by the hand.
60 I have wept, saying: "To my side they come not nigh."

---

1. Langdon uses here the term "mother goddess Ishtar," but the use of a personal name confuses the meaning here.
This prayer is addressed to unknown deities, who are addressed in general terms.

Reverse

1 I utter a lament, saying: "will none hear me?"
3 I am distressed, I am covered in gloom and see not.
5 "O my merciful god turn unto me,"
I entreat thee.
7 I kiss the foot of my mother goddess;
before thee I crawl.
9 "O god known or unknown, turn unto me,"
I entreat thee.
11 "O mother goddess, known or unknown, turn unto me,"
I entreat thee.
13 "O my lord, turn unto me,"
I entreat thee.
15 "O mother goddess behold me,"
I entreat thee.
17 "O god known or unknown, turn unto me,"
I entreat thee.
19 "O mother goddess, known or unknown, behold me,"
I entreat thee.
21 O my god,
how long until the rage of thy heart is stilled?
23 O my mother goddess
how long until thy hostile heart returns to its place?
25 O god, known or unknown,
how long until the rage of thy heart is stilled?
27 O my mother goddess, known or unknown,
how long until thy hostile heart returns to its place?
29 Mankind is dumb, and knows nothing.
31 Mankind, as many as are named, what know they?
33 Does he anything mean? does he anything good? he knows not at all.
35 O lord thou wilt not cast away thy servant.
37 He is thrown into the waters of a morass; O take thou his hand.
39 The sin which I have done convert into goodness.
41 The wrong which I have done may the wind remove.
43 Many are my insolences; like a garment sever them.
45 O my god,
seven times seven are my wrong-doings;
O free me from my wrong-doings.

46 O my mother goddess,
seven times seven are my wrong-doings,
47 O god, known or unknown,
seven times seven are my wrong-doings.
48 O mother goddess, known or unknown,
seven times seven are my sins.
49 Undo my wrong-doings, and I will sing thy praises.
50 May thy heart like the heart of a child-bearing mother
return to its place.
51 Like a child-bearing mother, like a begetting father
return to its place.

XXIV
Penitential Psalm to Ishtar

ASKT No. 15 Langdon, BPP 77

Obverse

1 She that executes the decrees of the Enlils ....
3 A pointed daggar, which ....
5 Creatress of gods,[1] who executes the decrees of the Enlils,
7 who causes the verdure to spring up, queen of humanity,
9 Creatress of all things, who guides all things created,
11 Amorous mother goddess, to whose side no god can approach,
13 Majestic queen, whose decrees are pre-eminent.
15 I will utter a petition, and she who is good unto me will do it for me.
17 O my queen, from the days of my youth, much have I been bound by calamity.
19 Food I ate not, weeping was my bread.
21 Water I drank not, tears were my drink.
23 My heart was not glad, and my soul was not cheerful.
25 ..... in confidence I walked not.

Reverse

1 I weep bitterly by myself.
3 Many are my wrong-doings, my mood is embittered.
5 My queen, learn what I have done, grant repose.
7 Forgive my sin, pardon me.
9 May my god, lord of prayer,
prayer to thee speak.
10 May the mother, my goddess, lady of intercession,
intercession to thee speak.
11 May Adad, lord of the mountain,
prayer to thee speak.
12 May Shala, queen of the plain,
intercession to thee speak.
13 May Ea, ram of the holy city,
prayer to thee speak.
14 May the mother of him of the far-famed house,[2] Damgalnunna,
intercession to thee speak.

---

1 Probably not in the sense that she created the gods, but "their creating agent," goddess of child-birth.
2 Marduk.

15 May Marduk, lord of Babylon,
prayer to thee speak.
16 May his spouse, Zarpanit,
intercession to thee speak.
17 May the faithful messenger, Nebo,
prayer to thee speak.
18 May the bride, First daughter of Urasa,
intercession to thee speak.
19 May the faithful princess, Tashmetum,
prayer to thee speak.
20 May the great princess, my lady Nana,
intercession to thee speak.
21 "Behold me faithfully," may they say to thee.
22 "Turn thy neck unto him," may they say to thee.
23 "May thy heart repose," may they say to thee.
24 "May thy mind be at peace," may they say.
25 May thy heart like the heart of a child-bearing mother return to its place.
26 Like a child-bearing mother, like a begetting father, return to its place.

XXV

A Semitic Penitential Psalm to a Man's Personal God

IV R 59 No. 2 Langdon, BW 11

Obverse

1 ... my soul ....
2 ... has smitten ....
3 .... the mightily afflicted.
4 ..... am I.
5 Wicked has been his hand, not am I able to bear it.
6 ..... not has he taught me.
7 ..... a ship.
8 ..... since distant days.
9 ..... has overwhelmed me.
10 And ... I ... and I exceed.
11 Male and female companions are far from me.
12 ..... of the breath of life.
13 ..... has forgotten me.
14 My family ..... like .... he has caused to flee.
15 Not am I ..... to converse with any one.
16 The designs of my speech which I have expressed I know not.
17 Have I acted slanderously, or robbed a wife of her portion?
18 The poison of shame has estranged my protecting spirit.
19 The kind protecting genius, and the kind protecting spirit wail over me. In my eyes tears continue to return.
20 Upon the mourner's stool in pain am I cast down.
21 My friend and companion rage against me: the people of my city rage against me.
22 I have transgressed the boundaries of god and pace (beyond them).
23 For food I eat filth and weeping.
24 For wine I drink water of the limbs and penis.
25 For wine of life I drink bitter waters. For a garment which clothes I wrap myself with the garment of retribution.
26 ..... I am overshadowed ...
27 ..... they have darkened.
28 ..... clay of the cattle stall.
29 .....
30 .....
.....

Reverse

1 ..... thy glory
2
3 May the retribution of god be absolved, may my frivolity be forgotten.
4 If unto my cry thou hast shown grace [I shall be at peace].

5 Oh my angry god, turn thy neck unto me. *
6 Oh my goddess, thou who art enraged receive my entreaty.
7 Receive my prayer and may thy soul repose.
8 Oh my lord, compassionate and merciful, hear me.
9 If ever I pass swiftly unto death, Oh be appeased.
9b Oh my god, unbind my wailing.
10 Oh my goddess, behold me and receive my prayer.
11 May my wrongdoings be absolved, my sins be forgotten.
12 May the curse be unbound, my bands be loosened.
13 May the seven winds remove my weariness.
14 May a bird pluck out my trouble and take it up into the skies.
15 May a fish carry away my distress and the river transport it.
16 May the creatures of the plain receive it from me.
16b May the running waters of the river wash me.
17 Cleanse me like a clean herb.
18 Like the glow of fire-stone may I be precious before thee.
19 Wipe away my trouble, protect my soul.
19b I will guard thy court, I will lay hold upon thy image.
20 From trouble cause me to pass over, and may I be spared beside thee.
21 Send me a propitious dream and may I see it.
22 May the dream which I see be good.
22b May the dream which I see be true.
23 The dream which I have seen turn into favor.
24 May Mamu god of dreams be steadfastly at my head.
25 Cause me to enter into Esagila the palace of the gods, the house of life.
26 Unto Marduk the merciful into kind hands unto goodness entrust me.
27 I will praise thy greatness, thy divinity I will extol.
28 May the people of my city glorify thy heroism.
29 Of thy ... before the gods may the peoples converse.

---

* Here begins Zimmern's edition. (BB No. 9)

XXVI

Penitential Psalm to Aya

(cf. ASKT No. 19) Langdon, BPP Plate XIX Langdon, BPP 29

Obverse

Priest[1]

1 O exuberance, the heroic woman ....
2 O my queen, unto thy servant turn thy neck.
5 With his eyes which shed tears ....
he prays to thee for peace.
7 With his darkened face
he prays to thee for peace.
9 Within his sanctuary, where tears cease not,
he prays to thee for peace.
11 With his lips on which a muzzle was laid,
he prays to thee for peace.
13 With his hand which is wearied with trembling,
he prays to thee for peace.
15 With his breast, which like a reed-flute echoes with the sound of lament,
he prays to thee for peace.

Penitent

17 O my queen, in anguish I have uttered cries in pain to thee;
command my release.
19 O my queen, for thy servant command, "It is enough,"
and may thy heart be at rest.
21 Upon thy servant upon whom misery has fallen have mercy.
23 Turn thy neck unto him, receive his prayer.
25 As for thy servant, against whom thou hast been wroth,
be at peace with him.

Reverse

1 O my queen, my hands are bound and I crawl before thee.
3 With the heroic and strong Shamash thy beloved spouse plead my cause;
may I journey unto life of distant days.
7 My god has made intercession unto thee;
may thy heart be at rest.
9 My mother goddess has spoken petition unto thee;[2]
may thy soul repose.

---

1 The text as found in Langdon, BPP 29 does not designate any lines to the priest and is preceded by this statement, "There is no trace of part singing in this prayer." But the list of errata (p. 106) directs that this statement be struck out as error; so I follow Sayce (HL 522) who designates these lines to the priest.

2 The Sumerian has the imperative, "speak petition."

17 May he say to thee, "Behold him faithfully."
18 May he say to thee, "Turn thy neck unto him faithfully."
19 May he say to thee, "Let thy heart be at rest."
20 May he say to thee, "Let thy soul repose."
21 May thy heart like the heart of a child-bearing mother return to its place.
22 Like a child-bearing mother, like a father who has begotten, may it return to its place.

XXVII

Penitential Psalm to a Goddess

IV R 29 No. 5 Langdon, BPP 80

Obverse

Penitent

1 The obeisance of those with the breath of life daily I have brought thee.
3 I, thy servant, as one full of sorrow, cry unto thee.
5 Thou receivest the petition of the sinner.
7 If thou beholdest a man, that one shall live.
9 O mighty lady of the universe, queen of humanity.
11 Merciful one, if thou turnest unto one it is good, receiver of prayers.
12 Merciful one, whose favor is good, receiver of prayers.

Priest

13 His god and goddess being angry with him, he calls upon thee.
15 Turn towards him thy countenance, take hold of his hand.[1]

Reverse

1 Beside thee a god who guides rightly I have not.

Penitent

3 Faithfully behold me, receive my prayer.
5 Command my release, may thy passion be stilled.
7 How long, O my lady, until thy face be turned?
9 Like a moaning dove I am surfeited with sighing.

Priest

11 With woes and wails his soul is wearied.
13 He weeps mournfully, he utters loud cries.

---

1 Lines 13, 15 are supplied from Jastrow, RBA 318. Langdon, BPP 80 translates the lines in this way:
13 His god and goddess, who have become angered with him, cry unto thee.
15 Thou wilt not reject him, but thou wilt take his hand.

XXVIII

Penitential Psalm. End of a Liturgy

IV R 26 No. 8 plus 27 No. 3 Langdon, BPP 35

Priest

1 Lamenting in his heart, wailing bitterly,
3 In lamentation he sits,
5 In painful sighings and distress of heart,
7 Wailing bitterly, lamenting bitterly.
9 Like a dove distressed he moans night and day.
11 Unto his own god, the merciful, like a wild cow he cries.
13 Lament sorrowfully to thee he makes.
15 Unto his god in prayer he prostrates his face.
17 He weeps and ceases not to lament.

Penitent

19 Verily I will speak of my deeds, my deeds the unspeakable.
21 I will repeat my words, my words, those not to be repeated.
23 I will speak of my deeds which I have done. What I have done is unspeakable.

.....

This text continued on the Reverse for at least 40 lines and ended;

Song on the flute to ....
Song on the flute (for the series .....)

XXIX

A Penitential Psalm (in which only the priest's parts are preserved.)

KAR 161 Langdon, BPP 4

Obverse

..... thy sanctuary he seeks.
2 .... thy sanctuary he seeks.
4 He seeks thy sanctuary; he seeks everywhere.
6 May thy angry heart return to its place.
8 May thy wrathful heart return to its place.
10 May thy foreboding wrath of heart return to its place.
12 May the ..... of thy heart return to its place.

.....

Reverse

1 ..... seven times seven absolve his transgression.
3 ..... seven times seven absolve his transgression.
5 O lord Enbilulu seven times seven absolve his transgression.
7 O queen Zarpanit, seven times seven absolve his transgression.
9 O lord Nebo, seven times seven absolve his transgression.
11 O queen Tashmetum, seven times seven absolve his transgression.
13 O lord, far famed Madanu, seven times seven absolve his transgression.
15 Absolve thou his transgression, release him from his retribution.
17 His transgression absolve, and may he sing thy praise.
19 May thy heart like a child-bearing mother return to its place.
21 Like a child-bearing mother, like a begetting father, may it return to its place.

XXX
To Marduk
Meek, BA X No. 4

Obverse, Col. II

2 Hero, brilliant being, whose body is full of glory,
4 Who in the forest of rikku (and) cedar speakest, shining in flames of fire,
6 Who makest laws concerning the shining sea and establishest ceremonies,
7 Whose fixed decrees, excellent to behold, are the protection of Babylon,
9 Hero, exalted prince, who in Babylon standest for a marvel,
11 Glorious one, who in E-sagila in the midst of the shining sea art full of splendor,
13 Who of mighty strength art bearded with a shining beard,
15 Lord, son of princes, who openest up the sea (and the fountains).

Reverse, Col. III

1 Mighty one, lord of the lands,
2 Lord of righteous decrees,
3 O Bel, father of the land,
4 Shepherd of the black-headed race,
5 Fearful being,
6 Glorious hero, judge,
7 Powerful one, mighty one,
8 O Lord, Ea!
9 O hero, Marduk!
10 O Lord, Marduk!
11 O hero, Nebo!
12 O Lord, Samas!
13 Lord of Babylon,
14 Lord of E-sagila,
15 Lord of Borsippa,
16 Lord of E-zida,
17 Lord of E-mahtila,
18 Lord of E-teme-an-ki,
19 Lord of E-dar-anna.
20 A maker of lamentation am I,
22 A man of prayer am I,
24 A man of supplication am I,
26 A father of children am I.
28 Until the moment of pacifying.
30 As for me, how long, O lord of servants, must I wait?
32 It is long enough,
33 "Cast me not down," unto him will I say.
35 Lamentation without end [will I utter].
37 Weeping without stay [will I make].

XXXI
To Sin
Meek, BAX No. 15

2 The mighty sin, which from the heart ...
4 The sickness of his heart, which existeth ...
6 The wall he despoiled, the abode of the enemy, a splendid omen ...
7 To the temple of heaven a prayer (he addresseth).
8 The hero, whose lamentation ...
10 O lord of earth, his lamentation (hear).

Reverse

1 A mighty sin the man (committed).
3 Against Sin, the lord of Ur, his sin (he committed).
5 O Manungal, lady of captivity (Sum. E-kur) the prayer (hear)!
7 The word of wailing and lamentation destroy not in the earth.
8 May he do ...

XXXII
To Sin (?)
Meek, BAX No. 16

Obverse

2 (To him who cutteth off) the life of the people,
4 To the lord of mountain and sea,
6 To him who cutteth off the life of the enemy,
8 I will pray unto him, I will pray unto him.
10 O lord thy servant (addresseth) a prayer (to thee).
12 A prayer awaiteth thee, he falleth on his face.
14 O lord of the earth, his lamentation (hear)!

Reverse

2 "Turn thine eye with favor upon me," may it say to thee!
3 "Turn thy face with favor toward me," may it say to thee!
4 "Thy heart be at rest," may it say to thee!
5 "Thy spirit be at peace," may it say to thee!
6 May thy heart, like the heart of a mother who hath given birth, be glad again.
7 Like a mother who hath given birth, like a father who hath begotten, may it be glad again!

---

8 A penitential psalm of 52 lines: a tablet to Sin (?)

---

9 He accepteth the prayer.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC The Abingdon Bible Commentary. New York: Abingdon Press, 1929.

Am. Tr. The Bible, An American Translation. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931.

AO Der Alte Orient. Leipzig: Hinrichs.

ASKT P. Haupt, Akkadische und sumerische Keilschrifttexte. Leipzig: Hinrichs.

AV Authorized Version of the Bible.

BA Beiträge zur Assyriologie und Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft. Leipzig: Hinrichs.

CAH The Cambridge Ancient History. Edited by J. B. Bury, S. A. Cooke, F. E. Adcock, et. al. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923 -.

CT Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum. 1896 -.

HBD James Hastings (editor), A Dictionary of the Bible. New York: Scribners, 1898.

H Hebraica: A Quarterly Journal in the Interests of Semitic Study. (Continued as American Journal of Semitic Literature.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

ICC International Critical Commentary. New York: Scribners.

JBL Journal of Biblical Literature. The Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis.

K Tablets from the Kuyunjik Collection of the British Museum.

KAR E. Ebelung, Keilschrifttexte aus Assur Religiösen Inhalts.

LXX The Septuagint.

MT The Masoretic Text.

MVAG Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft. Berlin.

PSBA Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology. London.

RP Records of the Past. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons.

RV Revised (American Standard) Version of the Bible. 1901.

VAT Tablets in the Berlin Museum.

WAI The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia. Published by the Trustees of the British Museum. Vol. I-V, founded by H. C. Rawlinson. Vol. IV is designated as IV R.

ZA Zeitschrift für Assyriologie. Leipzig: Otto Schulze.

ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft. Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann.

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I, William Rowell Locke, was born in Manchester, New Hampshire, November 20, 1907, the son of Rev. William B. Locke and Frances Rowell Locke. I attended grade school in Winchester, New Hampshire, and Lancaster, New Hampshire, and graduated from Lancaster High School in 1923. For one year I worked as machinist's apprentice in the Thompson Manufacturing Company in Lancaster. In the fall of 1924 I entered

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